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ABSTRACT

This report discusses literacy coaching as one strategy for professional development, describing how three San Francisco Bay Area school districts use literacy coaching, highlighting the benefits of using literacy coaching, and offering recommendations to districts and states. The report describes why the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative and many partner school districts are choosing to invest in literacy coaching. Literacy coaches are teachers who have content and instructional expertise in literacy. They are released from teaching so they can promote and support high quality literacy instruction through direct, school-based work with other teachers. This study examines how districts organize, fund, and support literacy coaches using data from interviews and focus groups with teachers, literacy coaches, principals, and district administrators and from observations of coaches' meetings, coaching sessions, and coached teachers' classes. Three districts are profiled. The main benefits of literacy coaching are: increased teacher willingness and ability to collaborate, peer accountability, and teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms; increased levels and quality of implementation of new instructional strategies; and support for new teachers. Many respondents indicated teachers became more receptive to change. Several cited coaches' ability to keep equity goals in the forefront of teachers' conversations and practice and help teachers use differentiated instruction with at-risk students. (Contains 19 references.) (SM)

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Literacy Coaching:

How School Districts Can Support a Long-Term Strategy in a Short-Term World

KILEY WALSH SYMONDS

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I. Executive Summary

This report, *Literacy Coaching: How School Districts Can Support a Long-Term Strategy in a Short-Term World,* focuses on one strategy for professional development. It describes how three Bay Area districts are using literacy coaching, highlights the main benefits to using literacy coaching, offers recommendations for district implementation and offers recommendations to the state on how to support innovative professional development. The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) believes that investing in and improving teacher quality is one of the most effective ways to raise and sustain high student achievement. In a climate focused on the quick fix approach to school reform, BASRC is committed to building long-term capacity for improvement. This report captures why BASRC and many of its partner school districts are choosing to invest in literacy coaching and why we believe this is a promising practice, especially when linked to a comprehensive district-wide plan for improving instruction.

Out of 26 BASRC districts, 18 or about 70% have district-supported literacy coaches. Literacy coaches are teachers who have both content and instructional expertise in literacy. They are released from teaching students so they can promote and support high-quality literacy instruction through direct, school-based work with other teachers. Literacy coaches model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and coach teachers one-on-one or in grade-level groups. Coaching breaks through the isolation that traditionally characterizes teaching and gives teachers the structured support they need to change their practice.

This study is descriptive rather than evaluative. It does not assess the impact of literacy coaching on student learning, but rather assumes that the research abundantly demonstrates both that improving classroom practice improves student learning and that coaching is an effective strategy to support teachers to implement new approaches. Those interested in learning more about this research would be well advised to begin with the work of Joyce and Showers. (see VIII. References) The question addressed in this report is how districts organize, fund, and support literacy coaches. The current study is based on interviews and/or focus groups with teachers, literacy coaches, principals and district administrators, and observations of coaches' meetings, coaching sessions and coached teachers' classes. All data was collected over the course of the school year 2001-2002.

District-Supported Literacy Coaching Models

The three districts profiled are examples of full-scale, district-supported initiatives at the elementary, middle and high school level. Our hope is that the three district examples—representing a variety of geographic locations, student demographics and grade levels—present a compelling case for how a single strategy can be adapted to work well in a multitude of settings.

Walnut Creek School District has full-time literacy coaches in all five elementary schools. Baseline funding for the initiative comes from their BASRC grant and the district's general fund; each school then patches together additional funding from sources such as their Parent/Teachers Organizations, Title I, SIP and GATE. Literacy coaches work with teachers individually and in groups during weekly grade-level collaboration time where coaches have the opportunity to work with every teacher in the school. Coaches also observe classroom instruction, demonstrate literacy strategies in classrooms, help teachers link assessment to instruction and help teachers access and use research. All strategies literacy coaches work on with teachers follow from the district's comprehensive literacy framework.

Campbell Union School District had ten literacy coaches in 2001-2002, five at the elementary level who each work half time per school and five at the middle school level at 1–1.5 FTE per school. The district has also trained nine additional teachers to become literacy coaches, so that in 2002-2003

Campbell will have a full-time coach in all ten elementary schools and 1.5 FTE in each of the three middle schools. Coaches are supervised by the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Joint Panel and return to the classroom after three years. They coach teachers to use research-based Literacy Connection strategies, focusing on grades three through eight and splitting their time about evenly between new and veteran teachers. All Campbell coaches are funded through PAR and BTSA; additional sources of funding include their BASRC grant, Title I, EIA, ELAP, SIP and GATE. Campbell literacy coaches demonstrate lessons, observe classes, coach teachers one-on-one and in groups, provide workshops for all staff, help teachers link instruction to assessment and teach summer school with new teachers.

East Side Union High School District has a literacy coach in all ten comprehensive high schools. In eight of East Side's schools the literacy coach position is filled by one coach working full time; in the other two schools the position is shared by part-time coaches. The largest sources of funding for the initiative are categorical, primarily EIA and Title I. East Side also uses Volunteer Integration Program funding, their BASRC grant and Staff Development funding through SB 1882. The role of the literacy coach varies from school to school, including coaching individual teachers and groups of teachers, observing classrooms and helping teachers access research. Coaches work with teachers in all disciplines and, in many of schools, coaches focus on teachers who work with the most at-risk kids.

Main Benefits

In schools where teachers work with coaches regularly, teachers, coaches and administrators report a growth of collaborative teacher culture marked by increased teacher willingness and ability to collaborate, peer accountability, individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms; increased levels and quality of implementation of new instructional strategies, and support for new teachers. Many discussed teachers becoming more receptive to change, with coaches inspiring them to "go outside their comfort zone." Several cited coaches' ability to keep equity goals in the forefront of teachers' conversations and practice and help teachers use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of at-risk students. Coaches also act as advocates between teachers and district leaders and increase school leadership capacity.

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Recommendations for District Implementation

1. **Prioritize and Align Funding**: In the absence of explicit state funding for literacy coaches, districts have to take initiative to prioritize coaching over other strategies and align all possible sources of funding accordingly.
2. **Develop a Clear Job Definition**: For a new role such as literacy coaches, districts must describe the job and communicate the job definition clearly.
3. **Communicate Why**: The district must have a cogent understanding of the rationale behind literacy coaching—i.e. how coaches are linked to the district's overall improvement plan and how they contribute to the district's goal of improving instruction—and ensure that this is effectively communicated to key stakeholders such as teachers and principals.
4. **Structure Coordination with Principals**: The district needs to provide time and incentives for principals and literacy coaches to communicate so that they develop a mutual understanding of how coaching meets site-based needs.
5. **Focus on Literacy Coaching in the Strategic Plan**: Literacy coaching must be a central strategy in the strategic plan, well integrated into a comprehensive district-wide research-based literacy program.
6. **Provide Professional Development for Coaches on Research-Based Strategies**: Districts must provide coaches with continual professional development on a core set of research-based literacy strategies and structured time to meet with other coaches to build professional skills and community.
7. **Structure Collaboration Time During the School Day**: Districts must structure time during the school day for coaches to discuss instructional practice with individual teachers or grade-level teams.
8. **Keep Coaches Closely Connected to the Classroom**: Districts should keep coaches closely connected to the classroom by requiring turnover, limiting the number of years a teacher can serve as a literacy coach.
9. **Continually Assess and Communicate Effectiveness**: Districts must continually assess effectiveness both to identify successes that can be shared with stakeholders and to identify challenges that can then be quickly addressed.

Recommendations for State Support

California is funding pressure, but under-funding support for schools to improve. The under-investment by the state in professional development and related support for teachers and for administrators is compounded by the requirements of a host of highly regulated funding streams.

Provide Flexibility with Accountability

In a system with clear statewide performance expectations, districts can be given flexibility and be held accountable to measuring and communicating progress. Districts with flexibility as to how they use funds and accountability as to outcomes will be more likely to innovate and meet local needs all while striving toward state-established standards.

Include Coaching in State-Funded Professional Development Programs

The state needs to invest funds in innovative forms of school-based professional development such as coaching. Currently, state professional development programs are weighted toward traditional forms of university-based professional development which, while valuable, often fail to translate into change in classrooms. The state should review and revise its rules and regulations to ensure that existing professional development funding can be used for effective school-based strategies such as literacy coaching.

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II. Introduction

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) is a foundation-funded non-profit organization that provides grants and professional development support to schools and districts in the six counties of the Bay Area. Founded in 1995 through the Annenberg Challenge, BASRC is funded primarily through the Annenberg and Hewlett Foundations. BASRC's mission is to foster a more equitable system of schools, raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap through focused, data-driven reform in both schools and districts. BASRC is not interested in a quick-fix approach to school reform; the organization is committed to building long-term capacity for improvement.

BASRC works to change the education system through:

- Providing grants to schools and districts that underwrite professional development and teacher collaboration time
- Coaching school and district leaders to initiate and sustain strategies to improve instruction, especially for English language learners and children of color
- Providing opportunities for regional education leaders to connect with one another and gain access to leading ideas and actors in the field
- Documenting promising practices and advocating for innovation in schools and districts

BASRC believes that quality teaching is the key to high student achievement and that investing in and improving teacher quality is one of the most effective ways to raise and sustain high student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Improving teacher quality is frequently discussed in terms of recruitment, preparation and retention. While this is important, it does little to improve the quality of teachers while they are in the profession. Even the debate about professional development for teachers is frequently skewed in terms of "knowing what;" i.e., teachers need more knowledge about the right things in order to improve. BASRC believes that quality teaching takes more than this; it takes both "knowing what" and "knowing how." Teachers need to know their subject matter but they also must know how to engage students with material and how to prioritize, adjust and differentiate strategies according to student need. Professional development in the form of workshops, conferences or reading materials can help teachers "know what." Learning how happens in the context of the daily work of teaching, and it takes substantive changes to both the structure and the culture of schools to make support for teacher learning a regular part of the education system.

The culture in schools, as well as the systems and structures that support that culture, can be a determining factor in quality teaching. In a school with a stagnant teacher culture, where all professional work occurs behind closed classroom doors, excellent teaching will only occur in spite of the school context. Conversely, a vibrant school culture, in which teachers are actively motivated to work together to pursue new knowledge, take risks with their practice by learning about, trying and sharing new research-based strategies, ask questions regarding their effectiveness and adjust practice based on student performance, will both attract and foster excellent teachers. In schools with a sense of professional community, classroom innovations aren't left in individual classrooms; they are disseminated and shared amongst the faculty and even the district. Teachers aren't constantly re-inventing the wheel; they are collectively improving their practice and learning in both formal and informal settings. These schools are characterized by a strong sense of peer accountability. Teachers don't accept the achievement gap as a fact of life; they see equity as a personal mission and responsibility, and challenge themselves to meet the needs of at-risk students. How does this kind of cultural shift happen? For a start, it takes a firm commitment from district and school leadership to provide the support and resources that teachers need. One form this commitment can take is literacy coaches.

What are Literacy Coaches?

Literacy coaches are classroom teachers who have both content and instructional expertise in literacy. They are released from teaching students so they can promote and support high-quality literacy instruction through direct, school-based work with other teachers. Literacy coaches model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and coach teachers one-on-one or in grade-level groups. Some districts use literacy coaches to help teachers implement a specific program; others use coaches to develop skills and strategies teachers can use with many different texts and subjects. Some release Literacy Coaches part-time, others full-time. All districts use literacy coaches to give teachers practical, hands-on support to improve their literacy instruction and meet the needs of all students. Decades of research about school change reveals that weak implementation is the Achilles heel of all school reform. Literacy coaches are a strategy invented by educators rather than politicians to address exactly this issue.

Why Coaching?

Coaching breaks through the isolation that traditionally characterizes teaching and gives teachers the structured support they need to change their practice. For members of a knowledge-based profession, teachers have remarkably few opportunities for structured peer interaction focused on practice. Most other knowledge-based professionals such as doctors or lawyers value regular, structured exchanges between colleagues over professional content as essential for professional growth (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Despite credentialing programs and workshops, most teachers learn how to teach through trial and error in professional isolation, too busy for systematic reflection. Coaching helps to rectify this problem by building communities of teachers who encourage and hold one another accountable in a constant effort to study and improve their craft. Coaching can help fight the greatest enemy of instructional change: isolation (Elmore, 2000).

Coaching does not replace more traditional professional development, but acts in conjunction with it to increase its efficacy. Teachers can certainly gain knowledge through workshops and institutes, but sustainable advances in practice take place in the classroom in the context of real work. Coaching is not a quick fix; it is a strategy that embeds expertise in the teaching force. Research shows that training combined with coaching results in a higher transfer of knowledge into practice than any other method of professional development delivery (Joyce & Showers, 1988). By demonstrating lessons, observing classroom instruction and coaching collaborative professional dialogue, coaches help teachers transfer new knowledge into professional know-how. This is particularly important to promote equity, as at-risk students frequently are taught by inexperienced or weak teachers. Even if low-performing students have highly-skilled teachers, it is quite challenging for teachers to differentiate instruction and make sure their students at the bottom have enough scaffolding and support to actually gain ground faster than their peers so they can meet or exceed grade level. Coaching not only gives support to inexperienced and weaker teachers, it supports all teachers in using a toolkit of strategies to meet the needs of all students.

Coaching, therefore, directly affects the heart of schools: teaching and learning in the classroom. It reduces the idiosyncratic nature of school communities in which core practices vary from classroom to classroom according to divergent personal beliefs and promotes a coherent instructional program in which teachers value and use aligned, research-based strategies. Coaching also addresses "volunteerism"(Elmore, 2000), the condition that so frequently characterizes education, the condition that leaves innovation and advancement to the few who volunteer. Coaching has the potential to spread change in a systematic manner and engage all teachers—not just those who elect—in changing practice. Coaching connects policy and practice, helping district curricular or instructional decisions to become classroom realities. And it does so because it is neither a top-down nor a bottom-up strategy; at its essence, coaching is a support mechanism that helps teachers realize why and how changing their instruction will help students learn.

Why Focus on Literacy?

Literacy—the ability to read and write with competence and skill—is a prerequisite for all

learning. Unfortunately, many California students lack the literacy skills they need to function even at grade level. On the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, the last year for which state-specific data are available, results are sobering. California scored at the very bottom with a handful of other states, without a statistically significant score above any other state. Of fourth graders in California, only 16% were proficient and 4% advanced; of eighth graders 21% were proficient but only 1% advanced. NAEP scores also paint a stark portrait of the achievement gap in literacy. Nationwide, 17-year-old African-American students score at the same level as 13-year-old White students on the NAEP reading test, and this gap has not decreased significantly over the past 20 years (Snow, 2002). This situation, however, is not inevitable. Individual schools do better, some much better than these average scores. The field of literacy, too, is changing rapidly, with advances in research providing more information about which skills children need to learn and by when, and how teachers can transfer these skills effectively. The fact remains, however, that the only way that student achievement will rise and the achievement gap will close is if students' literacy skills are significantly strengthened.

Though literacy may seem a concern for lower-grade teachers, upper-grade teachers must also have a toolkit of strategies for literacy instruction. Many middle and upper grade students lack the ability to make meaning from text, and many upper grade teachers have never been trained on how to teach students explicitly the skills they need for comprehension. Many English teachers who excel at teaching literature may not know how to teach students the basic components of reading comprehension. The importance of literacy should compel those who care about education to expand teachers' abilities to teach literacy.

Why Focus on District-Sponsored Models?

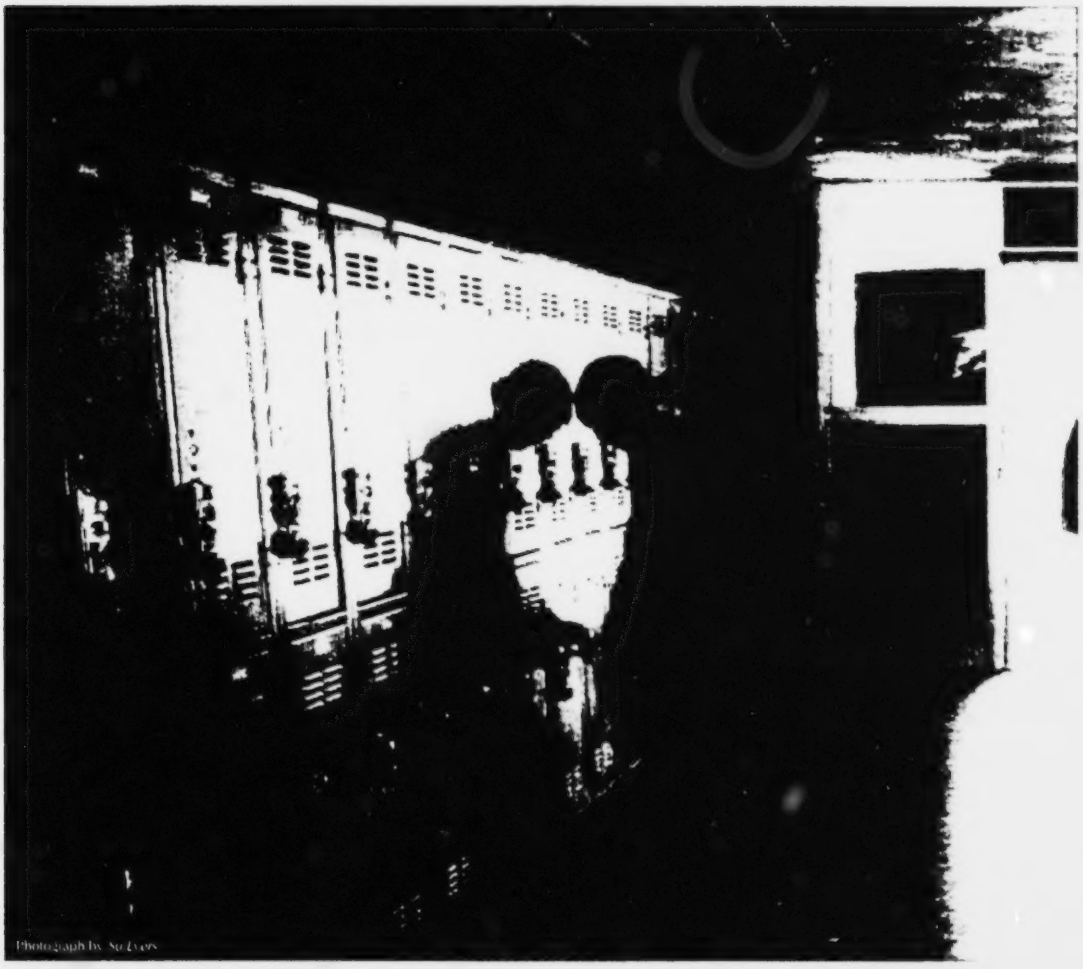
District support for school-based reforms is crucial to achieving system-wide—instead of random acts of—improvement. Districts define much of the context in which schools reform, and, therefore, frequently determine whether improvements are sustainable. District actions, however, are frequently superficial; districts are always making changes but few reach what's termed the technical core: the heart of teaching and learning. (Elmore) The most important component of the education system- -classroom practice—is also the hardest part for the district to change. This is why it is so important to look at districts that are actively engaged in improving the technical core, supporting teachers to improve, giving them the collaboration time, professional development, mentoring and coaching that they need to hone their craft. Districts that invest in helping teachers to continually improve their practice are making important strides in reinventing the role of the district.

Long-term support of a coherent, focused program such as literacy coaching takes both district leadership and, in today's tight fiscal times, creativity. As the gatekeepers to funding, district leaders must be capable of seeing how a myriad of state and federal funding sources might be aligned to support teachers at the classroom level (Shields et al, 2001). BASRC districts with literacy coaches are using BASRC grant funds to support the initiative, either directly in coaches' salaries or indirectly through professional development or collaboration time in which coaching occurs. But they have also discovered ways to support literacy coaching through state and federal funding.

While no nationwide survey of district practices exists, there is evidence that investing in literacy coaching is a nationwide trend. In California, districts as large as San Diego and Los Angeles are investing in coaching as an integral part of their reform strategies. Nationwide, districts such as Boston, Cleveland, New Orleans, Washington D.C. and New York's District 2 are also using literacy coaching as a key component of reform. The Bay Area is certainly not a region to lag behind; as the report below details, districts in this region are leaders in the literacy coaching arena.

Methodology and Presentation of Findings

This study is descriptive rather than evaluative. It does not assess the impact of literacy coaching on student learning, but rather assumes that the research abundantly demonstrates both that improving classroom practice improves student learning and that coaching is an effective strategy to support teachers in implementting new approaches. Thus this study assumes that coaching is worth



Photograph by Su Evers

doing; the question addressed here is how districts organize, fund, and support literacy coaches.

The study is based on interviews and/or focus groups with teachers, literacy coaches, principals and district administrators, and observations of coaches' meetings, coaching sessions and coached teachers' classes. All data was collected over the course of the school year 2001-2002. The purpose of this study is to describe one strategy for professional development: literacy coaching. The report presents portraits of how three districts are using literacy coaching, distills the main benefits to using literacy coaching, offers recommendations to other districts interested in using literacy coaches, and finally offers recommendations to the state regarding how to support innovative professional development.

BASRC is dedicated to spreading change in the education community. In a system frequently characterized by isolation, this can be a challenge—all across the public sector there is a general lack of research and development initiatives. This lack of good information frustrates innovation. As an organization committed to regional change, we are able to see trends and changes happening across counties but frequently those working in schools and districts are unaware of innovations. BASRC hopes that documentation such as this report can help to build momentum and support for innovative district practices. This report captures why BASRC and many of its partner school districts choose to invest in literacy coaching and why we believe other organizations should do so as well.

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III. Three District Examples

Most BASRC districts are supporting some type of literacy coaching—out of 26 BASRC districts, 18 or about 70 % have district-supported literacy coaches. We chose to profile the following three districts because they are examples of full-scale, district-supported initiatives at the elementary, middle and high school levels. They are, respectively, a small, a mid-sized and a fairly large district, with student enrollment ranging from just over 3,000 to just under 24,000. The districts also represent a range of student demographics, from less diversity than the state average to significantly more diversity than the state as a whole. One district is in a suburban area, one a suburban-urban, and one a largely urban area. All information presented is based on interviews, focus groups and observations of teachers, literacy coaches, principals and district administrators over the course of the school year 2001-2002. We hope that the following three district examples—representing a variety of geographic locations, student demographics and grade levels— present a compelling case for how a single strategy can be adapted to work well in a multitude of settings.

A. Walnut Creek School District Literacy Coaching Model

i. Overview

Walnut Creek Elementary School District is a K-8 district with five elementary schools and one intermediate school. Enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year was 3,268. The district's student body is 75.5% White, 9.9% Asian and 8.0% Hispanic or Latino. All five elementary schools are actively involved with BASRC, as is the district. Two of the six schools qualify for Title I funding and 96% of teachers are fully credentialed. All of the district's six schools have 2001 API scores above the state's median score and all met or exceeded their 2000-2001 API growth targets.

The district's main goals for the literacy coaching initiative are to close the achievement gap and to raise the level of critical thinking skills for all students. To further this goal, literacy coaches:

- Increase deliberate dialogue among teachers about teacher practice and student learning and
- Increase reflection on student work to inform instruction.

Walnut Creek School District has full-time literacy coaches in all five elementary schools. At Walnut Creek Intermediate the English department chair has one released period a week to coordinate literacy coaching. In addition, one sixth and one seventh teacher each receive a small stipend but no release time to coordinate literacy work at their respective grade levels.

2001-2002 is the first year in which the district has supported full-time literacy coaches in all five elementary schools. The literacy coaching effort is coordinated at the district level by Leslie Rupley, Director of Curriculum and Administrative Services.

How it Started

Four years ago one of the elementary schools hired an external consultant to do some literacy coaching on site. At the same time, student performance on multiple assessments, including the SAT-9, GatesMacGinitie, district assessments and teachers' grades, led the district to recognize the need for a district-wide focus on literacy. From 1998-2000, the district hired the same external consultant who had begun work in one elementary school to work with all five schools. This model did not work well; the support provider "ran around absolutely crazy" as Rupley put it, trying to work with all five schools. She could only meet with each school about four times a year. In 2000-2001, recognizing that one support provider wasn't meeting their needs, two schools funded literacy coaching positions at their sites, one full-time and one part-time. For the school year 2001-2002, the district began supporting a full-time coach in every school.

Coaches' Backgrounds and Selection

The district developed a job description and principals took the lead in identifying good candidates. Many coaches came to the position with a good deal of training experience, enabling the district to draw on their expertise for the group's professional development. Actual years of classroom experience among the six coaches ranges from just over five years to more than three decades. The least experienced teacher brought personal skills to the position which Rupley believes have helped her succeed. Four of the six coaches are working in the schools in which they taught. The other two were teaching in districts that already used literacy coaches and were familiar with the requirements of the position from the start.

Training and Support

Coaches meet for a full day every month facilitated by Rupley. The meetings are a balance of peer support and professional development on both literacy and coaching. Walnut Creek does not follow a prescribed literacy program. Instead, literacy coaches are trained in how to use, and coach others to use, a variety of district-supported, research-based literacy strategies including Mosaic of Thought comprehension strategies such as

inferencing and questioning, reciprocal teaching, graphic organizers, and Readers' and Writers' Workshop. Literacy coaches have expertise in all of these literacy strategies and more, and use their professional expertise to determine which strategy to advocate in which situation.

During monthly coaching meetings, coaches discuss challenges in their work, share new research and materials, and discuss and select professional development opportunities for themselves. The group has also watched and discussed videos about peer coaching and read and discussed professional books such as *Systems for Change in Literacy Education: A Guide to Professional Development.* Some time during monthly coaches' meetings is always devoted to district-level concerns such as ensuring that literacy coaches are calibrated as to how they score district assessments. The group is conscientious about their own collaborative work and they periodically revisit and reflect on whether they're observing norms of collaboration.

Coordination with Principal and Schoolsite Leadership

The district runs a Literacy Team meeting for a half-day every month. The literacy team is composed of the coaches, the Superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and Administrative Services, all of the principals, the Reading Recovery trainer, the EL coordinator, and a teacher representative from every school. The group focuses on how to lead literacy reform. They discuss understanding and using different kinds of data, leading collaborative organizations and working with resistant teachers and school cultures.

The Literacy Team has been instrumental in aligning the work and goals of the coaches, the principals and the district. When the coaching initiative began, for example, the Literacy Team members gathered in role-alike groups as principals, literacy coaches and teachers to discuss and define each of their separate roles and responsibilities. Rupley facilitated the subsequent whole-group discussion of each role until they reached consensus on the definitions of all three roles.

The distinction between coach and administrator is well preserved. Coaches know their position exists to support and help teachers, not evaluate them. Literacy coaches do help teachers formulate goals and support them in their classrooms, but they are not part of the formal process of evaluating whether or not goals have been met.

Collective Bargaining Support

The collective bargaining units in Walnut Creek have been involved from the start. As Rupley said, "We always get their buy-in. Whenever we make any changes, we seek their endorsement." The district engages in an interest-based bargaining procedure in which each of the units identifies their interests. These interests include opportunities for support, collaboration and professional growth. Superintendent Mike DeSa described the way the units' and the district's interests intersect: "if you looked at a Venn Diagram our commonality would be the notion of collaboration."

District administrators and coaches alike stress that it is essential to make sure that literacy coaches don't slip into quasi-administrative roles, both to preserve the integrity of the literacy coach role and to maintain good relations with collective bargaining units. Coaches have to be savvy about boundaries; for example, coaches might help teachers link assessment data to their instruction, but, as one coach put it, "I will not go around and collect [assessments]. This is an administrative job." She continued, "It has been a stress point for me with the union. Originally they perceived this position as administrative. They finally are at a point where they support us." Superintendent DeSa reflected on the coalition-building that has gone into the literacy coaching initiative and said, "the president of the union has said to me, 'I see now that you didn't just try to hire another administrator. You hired someone to support teachers.' And that's a big statement from them."

Accountability

Coaches document their work with teachers through journals, logs, calendars and notes; communicate their work through presentations to stakeholders; and evaluate their effectiveness through teacher surveys. Each literacy coach keeps a Collaboration Journal to capture work done during collaboration time. The form has been adapted from the National Staff Development

Council. It captures the main topic of discussion, key new ideas and information, activities since the last meeting, classroom applications, concerns/reflections/recommendations, plans for next meeting and the best idea to be shared with other collaboration teams. The coaches keep these notes and circulate them via memo to teachers. Literacy coaches also keep notes from their classroom observations and demonstration lessons.

Presentations are also an important component of accountability for coaches. Each literacy coach makes a presentation to the school board so that board members understand the role and purpose of literacy coaches. Coaches also make presentations to the Community Coordinating Council comprised of Parent Teacher Association/Organization presidents and parent leaders, and to the Strategic Planning Team composed of about 35 members including community members, city council members, representatives from business, parents, teachers, classified employees, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce. Coaches frequently use samples of student work in presentations to demonstrate the impact of coaching on student achievement. "I want [stakeholders] to know and understand that the work we're doing is improving student learning," said Rupley. "This is not business as usual. We have challenged kids to a level they haven't gone before."

The coaching position is also evaluated through end-of-year teacher surveys. The questions are targeted to determine the degree to which teachers use particular literacy strategies in the classroom and to assess the most effective coaching strategies. Questions asked include, "What impact has our collaboration model and the literacy coach made on your grade-level team this year?" and "What was the most significant support you received as a result of the [coach] position this year?" with a checklist including "observations and debriefings, discussions during collaboration, one-on-one coaching, professional development at staff meetings." Because these surveys are not used to evaluate teacher performance, the district is confident that teachers answer the questions honestly and accurately.

ii. Funding

Resource alignment is a priority for Walnut Creek. Each school has a strategic plan which is aligned with the district's strategic plan, and literacy coaching is predominant throughout. Each school has a different matrix of funding. Sources include:

- Bay Area School Reform Collaborative grant
- Title I
- Title II
- District general fund
- School Improvement Program (SIP)
- Parents/Teachers Organizations and Associations
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)
- Governor's Performance Awards

Additional sources that fund the supplies coaches use are:

- Title VI
- K-4 Classroom Library Program
- Instructional Materials Fund K-8

Walnut Creek's $100,000 BASRC grant goes to the district, which turns it over entirely to the five elementary schools at $20,000 each. The district also gives each elementary school $10,000 from its general fund. From this starting base of $30,000, each school patchworks funding together from the sources listed above to cover the rest of the expense. At the intermediate school, the sixth and seventh grade literacy coordinators receive $500 stipends to work with teachers after school hours.

The cost of full-time literacy coaching positions includes both the salary of the literacy coach and the literacy coach's full-time teaching replacement. The replacement teacher has, in most cases, been relatively new to teaching and lower on the salary scale, so schools cover the new teacher's salary rather than the higher coach's salary.

Most of the funding, including BASRC grants and the Governor's Performance Awards, is one-time funding. District and school staff alike engage in a constant effort to identify sources of funding to support coaching and are concerned about what will happen when revenues decline.

iii. What Literacy Coaches Do

Literacy coaches work with teachers individually and in grade-level collaboration teams, observe classroom instruction, demonstrate literacy strategies in classrooms, help teachers link assessment to instruction, help teachers access and use research, connect teachers to their peers, and offer staff professional development. All teachers are coached, including student teachers. Walnut Creek schools are small, with faculties ranging from 16 to 24 teachers; every teacher meets with the literacy coach during his/her respective grade-level collaboration time. All strategies literacy coaches work on with teachers follow from the district's literacy framework.

Coach Groups of Teachers

Coaches meet with all of the teachers in each grade level at each school twice a month during collaboration time. Each school provides 2¼ hours of collaboration time for each grade-level group every week. At a particular school, for example, first grade teachers might meet for 2¼ hours every Monday, second grade teachers for 2¼ hours every Tuesday, and so on. Two of the weekly collaboration sessions each month are facilitated by a literacy coach.

Every school in Walnut Creek has a central inquiry question about literacy with a specific focus on reading comprehension of expository text. Within this framework, each grade level has an inquiry question specific to that grade level's literacy concerns. During grade-level collaboration time, groups ask questions and compare notes about how different instructional strategies are affecting student achievement. As Buena Vista School Literacy Coach Maureen Fornengo described, "collaboration focuses right in on strategies teachers are using in the classroom. They debate effectiveness and whether or not certain techniques are working. They actually make decisions about instructional approaches." Teachers also discuss how they're teaching particular skills with an attention to detail for which they don't usually have time.

Literacy coaches set meeting agendas based on teachers' input and their own assessment of what grade levels need to work on to meet district goals. Coaches also help to align curriculum between grades. Because they work with all teachers, they can identify skill gaps and provide continuous feedback from grade level to grade level. "My position allows me to see the shifts that occur across the school," Literacy Coach Fornengo said. "I'm able to get the big picture."

Observe Classrooms

Observations serve as the glue between coached collaboration sessions and classroom practice. After a collaboration session, a coach will observe a lesson and then debrief with the teacher, or debrief with the grade-level group. Indian Valley School Literacy Coach Jan Knight explained, "I'll [debrief] during our collaboration time if we have a comparison—if they've all taught the same lesson. Kindergarten will frequently all teach the same lesson and then I'll see it in different classes. Then we'll all come together." Literacy coaches will occasionally videotape a class to discuss it with the teacher afterwards. Literacy Coach Fornengo explained that "one of the most difficult parts of my job is that I don't want teachers to see me as an evaluator so my feedback has to be extremely diplomatic. I want to give teachers suggestions, but I have to frame my feedback in such a way that teachers come to their own conclusions from my comments." Fornengo's diplomacy has enabled her to form strong, trusting relationships with teachers; she has been able to videotape many classes which teachers then watch during their biweekly collaboration time. Coaches learn a lot about teachers from observations, including their various areas of expertise. As one coach reflected, "I know who [the experts] are. I know more really than the principal does about that and where their areas of expertise are."

Demonstrate Lessons in Classrooms

Literacy coaches also devote time to demonstrating instructional strategies in teachers' classrooms. The typical visit includes a pre-conference with the teacher to discuss the strategy to be demonstrated and the role of the teacher, and a post-conference to debrief and talk about the ongoing support the teacher will need to try the strategy out on her own. Some of the strategies modeled at Walnut Creek include how to use Reciprocal Teaching, newly adopted Language Arts materials, graphic organizers, and K-W-L charts (what I know/what I want to know/what I've learned).

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Demonstrating lessons in classrooms is one important way in which literacy coaches establish trust with teachers. It shows teachers that coaches are willing to make themselves vulnerable, and that they have expertise. At Walnut Creek, demo lessons often result from teacher requests.

Link Instruction with Assessment

Walnut Creek schools use a variety of assessments in addition to the STAR test, including Gates-MacGinitie, writing samples, an observation survey which includes a running record analysis of several literacy components, and teacher grades. Coaches help teachers interpret assessment scores, ask questions about why students are performing at various levels, and choose literacy strategies to meet identified needs. Literacy coaches are also instrumental in calibrating teachers' scoring of assessments. For example, teachers might use collaboration time to read and grade a student-written paragraph. The coach would then facilitate a discussion about why teachers scored the way they did, grounding the discussion in explicit standards. These standards then feed back into how the teacher instructs students to write. At the middle school, literacy coaches worked with teachers to identify the standards measured in the CA seventh grade writing test and then ensured that the standards were woven into classroom instruction.

Spotlight on Coaching

Literacy Coach Jan Knight and 4th/5th grade teacher
Indian Valley Elementary

A 4th and 5th grade teacher has invited Literacy Coach Jan Knight to demonstrate a lesson on active reading. Knight joins the class about ten minutes into it. The teacher is reviewing comprehension strategies with the class, discussing the kinds of questions an engaged reader asks when reading a text. The teacher introduces Knight to the kids with, "and you all know Ms. Knight." A student calls out "you were here for link words!" Knight greets the children and puts up an overhead with the definitions of three types of questions on it: literal, inferential and evaluative. The teacher distributes the same information on a handout. Knight leads the class in a discussion of the three types of questions, reviewing the definitions and helping the students put them into their own words. She and the teacher then jointly introduce a new novel to the class. They distribute texts to every student, along with post-it notes. Without telling the class anything about the book, Knight instructs them to think of a question they have about the cover and write it on a post-it note.

As Knight calls on them, they volunteer their questions. The class then jointly decides whether the questions are literal, inferential or evaluative and justifies their decisions by using key words from the handout. Knight reads the beginning of the book aloud, stopping occasionally to model asking questions about the text. The students are highly engaged, to the extent that they want to interrupt Knight's modeling and answer all of her questions. "I bet I know what the girl is listening to on the radio!" one child calls out, waving her hand in the air. After the class ends, Knight and the teacher confer about the lesson as well as next steps. Knight suggests ways in which Reciprocal Teaching (RT) strategies can be used in the coming week. She describes how RT can be used in pairs or in groups of four and offers to help try it out in the coming weeks. The teacher makes links to what she's learned in an RT workshop and clearly gains a new and more practical understanding of how the strategy can be applied, remarking, "I never thought about it that way."

Link Teachers to Research

Coaches facilitate book club meetings with teachers; in some schools club meetings are held after school and in others the club meets during the collaboration time set aside during the school day. As Literacy Coach Knight explained, book club is a "research-based discussion of something we've read or we're reading together. There's always some kind of research we're reading." Coaches can help make research more tangible and applicable to teachers. Literacy Coach Fomengo reflected that, "our literacy coaches have all been teachers so they are able to bridge gaps between what is really possible and the ideal." Fomengo has also been instrumental in the creation of a professional library at her school just for teachers. At Indian Valley Elementary, grade-level teams meet in a teacher resource room surrounded by books so the literacy coach can locate relevant articles or handouts quickly and easily.

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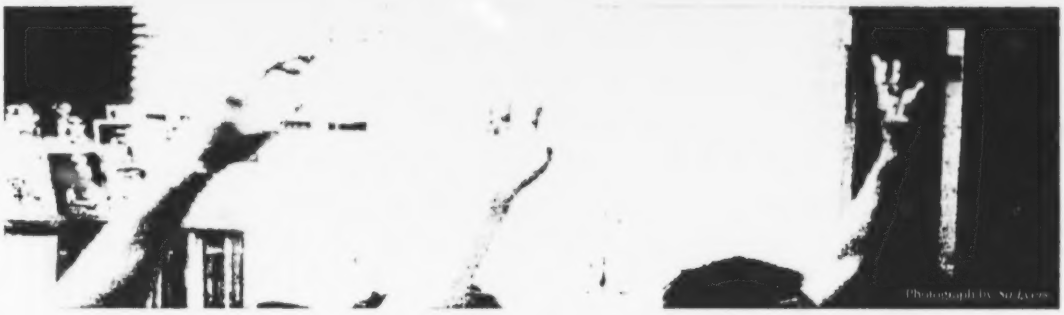

Link Teachers to Peers

Literacy coaches serve as vital links to other teachers both within school and among schools. Simply collaborating in a facilitated session every other week clearly links peers to peers, but collaboration takes place in other ways as well. Literacy Coach Knight described her number one goal during her second year of coaching as "getting teachers to be peer coaches to their colleagues." In one example, after a discussion with 4th grade teachers on how to teach writing transitions, a coach contacted the junior high and learned more about how writing transitions are taught at the middle school level. After a coached collaboration session on Junior Great Books, teachers familiar with the program went into their colleagues' classrooms and did a lesson to get them started. Knight is also trained in Junior Great Books but felt it was more important to encourage leadership from within the teaching staff.

Provide Staff Development

Coaches occasionally do workshops with all staff. Literacy Coach Fornengo worked with the staff at her school during an in-service day at the beginning of the school year focused on comprehension strategies, writing skills, and working with English Language Learners. Literacy Coach Knight has done jigsaw activities with the staff at her school and facilitated staff discussions on literacy.

iv. Future Directions

Rupley is excited about getting teachers to observe one another. She feels that the literacy coaches have begun the difficult work of opening classroom doors and establishing openness and trust in the benefit of observation and collaboration. This is true for coaches as well. "I'm supporting them in very different ways than I did," Literacy Coach Knight said. "What I'm doing is weaning them away from me supporting them to them supporting each other. I think that's the only way you're going to get sustainability. They have to buy in to the fact that working together and creating the continuity makes the difference."

The district has also decided to make literacy coaches BTSA coaches, working with new teachers through the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. Mentoring new teachers is a natural extension of the coaching role, since coaches already work with all teachers. This will mean an additional $1,000 stipend for each coach, but will not increase the general pool for coaches' salaries. Explicit coaching through BTSA will also ensure that the goals of new teachers are aligned with the literacy goals of the coaches, school and district.

One of Walnut Creek's litearacy coaches is going back into the classroom; although she enjoyed her coaching role, she missed being full-time in the classroom. Once back, however, she will run an open or "lab" classroom, which will extend her knowledge and leadership into the teaching force. The district is excited about the possibility of more lab classrooms and peer-to-peer visits and modeling. Superintendent Mike DeSa reflected, "the next couple of years will be very interesting. To see if we're able to put a stamp on [literacy coaching], stamp it as part of our ongoing culture here."

B. Campbell School District Literacy Coaching Model

i. Overview

Campbell Union School District is a K-8 district in San Jose, Campbell, Los Gatos and Saratoga with thirteen schools—ten elementary and three middle. All schools and the district are members of the BASRC community. Enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year was 7,587. The district's student body is 46.4% White, 31.3% Hispanic or Latino, 13.9% Asian and 5.2% African-American. Five of Campbell's 13 schools qualify for Title I funding, and eighty-six percent of teachers are fully credentialed. Eight of the nine elementary schools tested and all three middle schools have 2001 API scores above the state's median scores. One of the elemetary schools is in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (IIUSP). Seven of the nine elementary schools tested and two of the three middle schools met or exceeded their 2001-2002 API schoolwide growth targets.

In 2001-2002, the district funded ten literacy coaches, five at the elementary level at .5 FTE per school and five at the middle school level at 1–1.5 FTE per school. During the 2001-2002 school year the district trained nine additional teachers to become literacy coaches. In 2002-2003, these additional coaches will bring the Campbell model to a full-time coach in every elementary school and 1.5 FTE per middle school. Campbell coaches are referred to interchangeably as Literacy Coaches and Peer Support Providers.

Campbell coaches are supervised by the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Joint Panel, a local governance structure composed of three teachers and two district administrators. In Campbell, coaches return to the classroom after three years of coaching. The coaching initiative is focused on grades three through eight. Cindy Moore, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, is the district coordinator. The goal for Campbell coaches is the same as that of the district as a whole: to make sure that students meet or exceed district and state standards. This means investing in teachers, because, as Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen put it, "kids' achievement is only going increase due to teachers."

How it Started

Campbell began funding two full-time released literacy leaders in 1993, mainly to support new teachers. Five years later, in 1998-1999, the district began supporting mentor teachers at each site through the Beginning Teachers Support and Assistance (BTSA) program. The literacy leaders coordinated the mentor teachers and spent time in new teachers' classrooms. Analyzing the two strategies, the district recognized that teachers received better and more complete support from the literacy leaders who were released full-time to coach and model in classrooms, whereas mentors still had to carry a full teaching load.

Based on an analysis of student achievement data, the district identified vocabulary development and reading comprehension as the main academic areas on which to focus. In 1999, an opportunity for additional funding aligned with the district's needs arose through the creation of the PAR program. In 2000-2001, Campbell funded a .5 FTE coaching position at each elementary school and 1-1.5 FTE coach(es) at the middle schools. When BASRC increased Campbell's grant funding in 2001-2002, the district began training additional coaches.

Coaches' Backgrounds and Selection

Coaches are interviewed and hired by the PAR joint panel. All of Campbell's current coaches were full-time teachers in Campbell schools, but they are not necessarily coaching in the schools in which they once taught. Teachers must have five years of classroom experience to apply and they need letters of recommendation from their principals. Applying teachers self-assess on a teaching standards rubric. Their principals assess them using the same rubric. Teachers must also complete short applications explaining why they want to become literacy coaches and what strengths they would bring to the position. CLAD or BCLAD certification is an asset, and a few coaches have administrative credentials or Master's degrees in literacy, though none of these qualifications is required.

Training and Support
Coaches receive one year of training before they become full-time released coaches. During this year they are matched with experienced coaches who function as their mentors. Many work with student teachers who can occasionally take over their classrooms. On these released days, the coaches-in-training can attend professional development and shadow their mentor coaches. The year of training gives teachers a clear understanding of expectations and responsibilities before becoming literacy coaches.

Campbell invests heavily in professional development for literacy coaches. "It's critical that we have coaches be on the cutting edge of what's happening in the research as far as student learning," said Superintendent VanderMolen. "This is a lot of money that we're putting into this program and the coaches. To have an impact on student learning we need to make decisions based on research and facts, and not just hunches about what we do."

During the first year of the initiative, consultant Erlinda Teisinger trained coaches on Literacy Connection (LitConn) strategies. LitConn is a standards- and research-based literacy program with delivery strategies and assessments. The strategies focus on ways to teach vocabulary and reading comprehension, including Readers' and Writers' Workshop, Guided Reading and Link Words. Most strategies coaches work on fall under the LitConn umbrella. Coaches also learned how use the Reading Oral Language Assessment (ROLA) to gauge students' literacy levels and have devoted time to calibrating their scoring. During the second year of the program, coaches used their time together to deepen their understanding of these strategies, specifically so they could help teachers work more effectively with English Language Learners.

Every Friday the coaches and the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development meet for half- or full-day professional development sessions. Coaches also participate in training during the first and last two weeks of the school year, and have abundant opportunities to attend workshops and conferences. An important function of the literacy coaches' weekly meetings is support. Coaches use the time together to share and discuss challenges they're having in their work, using each other as an audience to test upcoming presentations. Together, coaches develop norms for successful coaching and hone effective strategies for listening and questioning.

Coordination with Principal and School Site Leadership
Coaches are part of the leadership teams at their school sites and they meet frequently with their principals. Under the umbrella of the district's focus, principals, coaches and school staff develop annual site coaching plans. Principals meet monthly for half- or full-day professional development sessions and receive training on the same strategies the coaches learn. In the fall of 2002, principals and coaches will have two days of district-sponsored training together. "We really need the time to focus on what the coaches, teachers and our principals are doing," said Director of Curriculum Moore, "so we don't lose communication and the knowledge that goes with it." District support for collaboration is essential; as Superintendent VanderMolen said, collaboration between principals and coaches "can't just be expected to happen. It needs to be planned."

The district encourages principals to be instructional leaders who understand various literacy strategies and, ideally, can model them in the classroom. Principals develop these skills in part through attending professional development given by literacy coaches. Literacy Coach Barbara Ungersma at Monroe Middle School described the way her principal attends her staff development sessions, taking notes on his laptop and putting them up on an overhead screen. She added, "he is making it clear that he is buying into it and I really appreciate that kind of support." Capri Elementary School's Literacy Coach Diane Sanck described the coach/principal relationship as collaborative; "the principal will ask teachers, 'How can Diane and I meet your needs?'" She went on to describe how the principals she works with have supported teacher collaboration—to the extent that principals have taken over classes so teachers can be released to observe their peers.

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Principals have been trained in how to look for literacy strategies during walk-throughs. One coach said, "I don't want to sound heavy-handed, but the administrator who makes [using literacy strategies] a part of their evaluation conversations with teachers I think gets more buy in. Administrator support really makes a difference." In some schools, administrators ask to see strategies that teachers have been working on with their coaches. Both coaches and principals make it clear to teachers that principals are the evaluators; coaches are not. Capri Elementary School Principal Debbi Garcia said, "it has to be clear and laid-out that when the [coach] and the principal talk it is in no way linked to evaluation. That trust has to be developed."

Collective Bargaining Support

The district benefits from a close relationship with their collective bargaining unit, fostered through the formal role of the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) joint panel. The literacy coaches are officially governed by the PAR panel and three of the five members on the panel are representatives from the teacher's association. This structure has helped to secure support for coaching. "When our coaches first came on there were some grumblings about '[the union] says we don't really have to go to the meetings,'" explained Director of Curriculum Moore, referring to the resistance some teachers had to attending literacy coaches' lesson demonstrations. The PAR joint panel "sent out a message–'Oh yes we do [have to be involved]. These are our teachers and we're supporting them.'" Assistant Superintendent Heil agreed that the governance of the PAR joint panel has helped "the union feel that it is their program and it is valuable and they want to see it continue... they helped to create it."

Accountability

Campbell coaches document and present their work to external stakeholders and receive feedback on their success from both teachers and principals. The district requires each coach to keep a sample, such as an agenda or sign-in sheet, of her monthly workshops, as well as Planning and Reflecting logs and calendars recording daily sessions with teachers. When meeting with new teachers, coaches keep a Collaborative Journal to record what's working; the teacher's current focus, concerns and challenges; the teacher's next steps and the coach's next steps. At the end of the school year, coaches present their work to the Campbell school board.

Accountability also takes the form of principal and teacher feedback. At the end of the 2001-2002 school year, the district surveyed individual teachers on best practices. Teachers self-assessed on a specific checklist of literacy strategies, indicating how frequently they felt they used strategies in the fall, winter and spring. Coaches also survey teachers after workshops to gain a sense of what worked and to inform their next training sessions. When principals spend time in teachers' classrooms, several coaches report that they get feedback as to whether the principal sees evidence of the literacy strategies on which the teachers have been coached.

ii. Funding

All of Campbell's coaches are funded in part by:

- Peer Assistance Review (PAR)
- Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA)

Campbell uses several additional sources of funding to support literacy coaches:

- Bay Area School Reform Collaborative grant
- Title I
- Title I (Even Start)
- Title VII: Refugee Children
- Federal Class Size Reduction
- Safe and Drug Free Schools
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE)
- Economic Impact Aid (EIA)
- School Improvement Program (SIP)
- Emergency Immigrant Education Program (EIEP)
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)
- English Language Acquisition Program (ELAP)

- School Safety Block Grant
- Instructional Time and Staff Development Reform Program

Coaches working in Campbell's summer school are also partially funded through:

- Summer School/Intervention

All coaches are multi-funded and each coaching position is funded a little differently. Categorical funds linked to specific student populations, such as Title I, GATE and ELAP, are only used to fund coaching positions at schools with corresponding student populations. Similarly, if funds are tied to certain grade levels, the money is only used to fund coaches who work with those grades. The rest of the funds are pooled and distributed accordingly. Some schools have augmented the funding from the district, adding to the variety between schools. Coaches fill out timesheets, but are not responsible for matching their activities with specific funding streams. Instead, the district does its best to determine what to attribute where, following Director of Curriculum Moore's mantra to first do the right work and then do the paperwork in a way that "makes the auditors happy."

BASRC funds partially support the nine new literacy coaches, covering their release time for training in 2001-2002 and part of their salaries in 2002-2003. Principals requested this allocation of resources; they told the district they wanted additional BASRC money to go toward funding one full-time coach per school site. To find all of the money they needed to fund the initiative, Campbell looked at all of the disparate funding sources that could possibly be used. "There are pockets of money all over the place," Assistant Superintendent Heil said, adding that they realized, "If we put them together we could do it. So we just decided to do it."

iii. What Literacy Coaches Do

Campbell literacy coaches demonstrate lessons, observe classes, coach teachers one-on-one and in groups, provide workshops for all staff, help teachers link instruction to assessment, connect teachers with their peers, and teach summer school with new teachers.

They coach teachers to use research-based Literacy Connection strategies. "There is a menu off of which we select [strategies] to do," explained Superintendent VanderMolen. "It's not arbitrary. That's part of staying focused as a district."

Coaches split their time between new teachers and veteran teachers about evenly. In general, new teachers take priority and, in the elementary schools, teachers in grades 3-5. Among the two or three schools a coach is allotted, she usually works with between five to ten new teachers. Coaches work a minimum of one hour every week with each new teacher; frequently they have much more contact. Coaches work with veteran teachers when teachers ask for help, or when the principal requests it following the veteran teacher's receipt of an unsatisfactory evaluation. On a few occasions, principals have directed coaches to work with grade levels in which student achievement is low. The principal at one school, for example, wanted to address weak fourth grade writing. The coach marshaled her resources, gave a training, modeled lessons, observed, and coached fourth grade teachers to reflect on their practice.

Demonstrate Lessons in Classrooms

Demonstrating lessons is the cornerstone of the literacy coaching initiative in Campbell. As Literacy Coach Diane Sanck said, "If you just go to a seminar, the folder goes on the cabinet. When someone from outside is able to come in and demo, you're more likely to implement the strategies." In the first year of the coaching initiative, coaches gave structured demonstrations in various classrooms the week following each Friday training session. Teachers were required to watch the demos during their prep periods. Coaches made a point of modeling in classrooms representing all grades and subjects to make it clear that strategies were usable across an entire school. Literacy Coach Shannon Campbell reflected, "it took a lot of work on our part to go in and say 'What unit are you working right now? Parts of the cell?' And then we got to go back and pull out their science book and figure out a lesson that would be appropriate. It was a lot of work, but I think that's what made it good, it wasn't something that was random."

During the second year of coaching, coaches continued to do demos in teachers' classrooms and feel it has been instrumental in continuing the momentum of change. "We're continuing to demonstrate these lessons," said Literacy Coach Kathleen McCowan. "So if a teachers says 'I would really like to know a little more about this. I hear that it's being used in someone's classroom and it's successful,' then we can continue to go back in and re-teach it and talk about it."

Demonstrating helps to make coaches vulnerable, too, and levels the playing field. One coach remembered first going into classrooms and demonstrating lessons, especially in grades other than the ones she had taught, and admitted, "it was out of my comfort zone at first." As Director of Curriculum Moore explained, "Coaches have the attitude that they're not experts. They're always learning, willing to open themselves up to coming into strange classrooms." Talking about demos, literacy coach Ungersma said, "at the beginning it was really hard; to be honest it was just terrifying. I had never been on stage like that before." Demonstrating lessons is also necessary for maintaining coach legitimacy. "In classrooms, in front of kids and teachers, it's good for credibility and good for us," said one coach. "It's the real world."

Observe Classrooms and Provide One-on-One Coaching

Observations are used frequently in the coaching cycle, with a conference before and a conference after each visit to ensure that teachers feel supported and receive constructive criticism to improve their practice. In the Reflective Coaching Cycle, the teacher picks a literacy strategy and designs a lesson around it. The teacher and coach then review the lesson, clarifying aspects such as objectives, how to assess what the students have learned, and the teacher's personal goal in delivering the lesson. The coach will then observe, sometimes videotaping the lesson. If videotaped, the teacher can choose to watch the tape alone or with the coach, depending on his/her preference. Afterwards, the teacher and coach discuss the class, referring to their original objectives and focusing on next steps. If coaches take notes during observations, they return them to the teachers to make sure they stay confidential. The onus is on each teacher to reflect; as Coach Kathleen McCowan said, "If you've just done a lesson I'll say, 'Well, how do you think it went?'" If the teacher then replies, "'Boy, I sure fell down there!' Then we can work on that together. I'm not going to say 'that was terrible.'...that would fall under evaluation." If the lesson is weak, however, coaches will find a way to raise the important issues.

Provide Workshops for Full Staff

All Campbell literacy coaches conduct staff workshops at their schools during district-supported minimum Wednesdays. They conduct twelve seminars each year, about once every three weeks, during the hour and a half of early release time. Some coaches make professional development presentations even more frequently. In the days following a training, the coach will model the lesson in the class of anyone who makes a request.

Workshops during the second year were on the same strategies as the first year, but with more of an English Language Learner (ELL) focus. As Assistant Superintendent Heil said, "we're taking our same strategies but ramping them up for ELD. [We're] trying to add to our staff development that we did last year and say 'here's the strategy. Here's how you can apply it specifically to address the gap and work with ELL kids and struggling students."

Coach Groups of Teachers

Coaches meet with teachers every Wednesday afternoon following the minimum day, during teachers' prep time and after school. Three Wednesday afternoons each month are used for grade-level Cycle of Inquiry work during which teachers examine student work together and investigate how they can improve their practice and increase student achievement. This collaboration time, or "Sacred Talk Time" as some of the schools call it, can be a forum for coaching, especially when teachers discuss how the literacy strategies they're employing are working with at-risk students. Once a month, Wednesday collaboration time is reserved for professional development workshops given by literacy coaches.

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Coaches also work with groups of teachers if they receive a specific request. Monroe Middle School's Literacy Coach Barbara Ungersma described how Physical Education teachers asked her to help them integrate literacy into their curriculum. Once a week in Physical Education classes students read an article from a science or health magazine. Ungersma introduced "use the two-word strategy" to help students learn more from the reading activity. "The kids pick out two words in an article that are significant and explain why they chose those two words," said Ungersma. "It's a simple strategy. there's no written work involved because the kids don't have their binders [in PE] But they're reading and comprehending."

Link Instruction with Assessment

Coaches help teachers use the Reading Oral Language Assessment (ROLA) to inform their instruction. This 10-15 minute diagnostic assessment is standards-based and gauges students' literacy levels through oral fluency and ability to summarize text. All teachers are expected to administer ROLA three times a year with K-3 students, and, in grades four and up, with those students below the 36th percentile on the SAT-9. Teachers must change their classroom instruction to accommodate administering an assessment to individual students. To facilitate this transition, coaches do classroom demonstrations on how to administer the assessment. Coaches will also work with teachers to look at data on individual students and help them determine how to meet the students' needs. "Really our goal this year is to help them use [ROLA] to teach, and use it to support our ELL students," explained Director of Curriculum Moore.

Coaches also help teachers focus their inquiry on at-risk kids, using assessment data to guide their questions. The district expects that each teacher will identify three at-risk students, generally English Language Learners in the bottom third, and do classroom-based inquiry on them. Coaches can help teachers with this process during the Sacred Talk Time during minimum Wednesdays.

Link Teachers to Peers

Peer coaching is beginning to take place to different degrees according to the level of readiness at each site. The district arranges substitutes for new teachers so they can visit their peers' classrooms. "Our coach will go with them to another teacher's classroom," explained Director of Curriculum Moore. Coaches "talk new teachers through [the visit]. We don't just send them." Coaches offer other perspectives and the chance to debrief afterwards and plan ways to bring strategies back to their own classrooms. Occasionally a coach will fill in for a teacher so she may go

Spotlight on Coaching

Literacy Coach Barbara Ungersma and first year 6th grade math teacher
Monroe Middle School

The session begins as the two debrief a class Ungersma observed earlier in the week. They discuss how the teacher used memory tricks to introduce new vocabulary, e.g. associating "obese" with "obtuse" angles. Ungersma asks about an at-risk student in the class and they discuss his progress that week. The teacher expresses frustration about not being able to use SAT-9 data as a teaching tool because "it's not fine grained enough." Ungersma talks about how the teacher can use Edmin to analyze the progress of individual students in 110 cluster areas and offers to show her how to do it. They then discuss an upcoming math assessment the district administers and the teacher asks "what's the point of the test?" Ungersma explains "it looks at the overall weaknesses in the math curriculum." The teacher asks for more clarification about how the results might inform her classroom practice and Ungersma gives an example. "You could look at the results and see 'my kids are not able to explain their thinking. I need to do more math journals.'" The teacher then discusses how she loves the math questions on the assessment and would like to do more to prepare students for these types of word problems. Ungersma promises to get her some more practice word problems and records it on her "coach's next steps" sheet. Ungersma suggests that the teacher do these word problems on Fridays as problems of the week. The teacher agrees to give it a try.

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observe another teacher's class, but this does not happen often. Coaches are clear that they are not substitute teachers and will usually only offer to sub when no other alternative is available. Some coaches have tried "buddy literacy," a strategy used most frequently by the district's one II/USP school. In this model, two teachers combine their classes. The coach and one teacher then co-teach while the second teacher is free to observe. Teachers' classrooms are frequently a source of learning for coaches as well; Literacy Coach Ungersma reflected "I find something in every teacher's classroom that I can take and give to another teacher."

Coaches have helped facilitate cross-schoolsite visits as well. One coach described such a visit. "Teachers from the two schools didn't even know each other. Now they know each other's names and when we're setting up observations they want to go to the other teacher's site. The first [cross-site visit] the attitude was 'Oh, they're coming over here?' and I had to say 'have a positive attitude.' Now they're excited and asking 'who's classroom are we going to go visit?'"

Teach Summer School with New Teachers

Starting in summer 2001, literacy coaches were paired with new teachers during summer school. Each pair teaches summer school classes in the same room. In 2001, the first year Campbell tried this, the district had 24 new teachers and, according to Assistant Superintendent Heil, the strategy "was highly successful with bringing in new teachers." New teachers are paired with master teachers for four weeks, at a ratio of two teachers to 24 students. Coaches can choose to be compensated in money or comp time during the school year.

iv. Future Directions

Campbell is dedicating all efforts toward raising student achievement while closing their achievement gap between English Language Learners and English-only students. Literacy coach training will therefore focus on meeting English Language Learners' needs. "Looking at data," said Superintendent VanderMolen, "we're finding that the areas that we really need to do next steps on are our second language learners, and the area of differentiating instruction." Literacy coaches are going to receive training on how to use ROLA with English Language Learners specifically. As the coaching force expands to include the nine new coaches, the district will make an effort to assign strong, experienced coaches to the schools with the neediest students.

Accountability is going to be strengthened. "That's where we are grappling now," explained Assistant Superintendent Heil. "What does it look like to be accountable? That's why we gravitated to BASRC—because we were so much in-sync with its philosophy. We've been looking at student data for so long but what [BASRC] adds is 'what are the teachers doing?'" Campbell is developing a teacher practice rubric for teachers to self-assess on literacy strategies in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Teachers have the option of using the rubric with colleagues, their coaches or their principals. The process is intended to encourage teacher reflection, make expectations explicit and increase accountability. Director of Curriculum Moore reflected, "if you're not held accountable to making any changes, you can have all the wonderful workshops and coaching in the world but if you don't choose to make any changes... [the rubric] will hopefully help with that."

Coaches will also have a rubric to evaluate their own progress in moving teachers forward. Next year administrative support teams will be having regularly scheduled walk-throughs, using a teacher practice rubric to look specifically for literacy strategies. The rubric is not intended to be used as an evaluation tool; it is an observation tool. The district hopes that this change will make it clear that principals are being held accountable for how they support teacher growth.

C. East Side Union High School District Literacy Coaching Model

i. Overview

East Side Union High School District in San Jose has ten comprehensive high schools, four of which are in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). Five of the district's schools are members of the BASRC network, including two of the II/USP schools. Enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year was 23,665. The district's student body is 40.5% Hispanic or Latino, 27.3% Asian, 16.0% White and 10.1% Filipino. Seven of the ten schools qualify for Title I funding. Eighty percent of teachers are fully credentialed, which is less than the state average of 86%. The district's median 2001 API score of 630 is just under the state's median high school score of 636. Three of the ten schools met or exceeded their 2001-2002 API growth targets.

All ten high schools have literacy coaches. In eight of East Side's schools the literacy coach position is filled by one coach working full time. In the other two schools, the position is shared by two part-time coaches who also hold other positions such as BASRC reform coordinator or ELL teacher. The initiative is coordinated at the district level by Karalee Roland, Director of Education. Roland reports to Dan Ordaz, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, and she is stationed out in the field at Independence High School.

The goal of the literacy coaching initiative is to support teachers in implementing effective literacy strategies across the curriculum, with the end result of increased student achievement. Assistant Superintendent Ordaz explained, "the big picture is embedding literacy into the fabric of the school." Director of Education Roland elaborated, "It's peer support for teachers in the classroom because that's where the changes happen." She added, "kids are the ones who ultimately benefit as teacher behavior changes."

How it Started

In 1999 East Side convened a literacy task force because, as Assistant Superintendent Ordaz explained, "we were all sensing such a problem with literacy as a result of our SAT-9 scores." The task force recommended that the district begin using a reading assessment tool, adopt a reading curriculum, and support teachers with literacy coaches.

The district's model for full time coaching grew out of a math and science coaching model the district had previously funded through the National Science Foundation. In addition, Santa Teresa High School began funding a literacy coach position in 1998 using BASRC funds. Starting in the school year 2000-2001, the district began funding a literacy coach position in every school.

Coaches' Backgrounds and Selection

All of the coaches have taught in East Side schools. Eight are coaching in the schools where they once taught; the other two merely switched schools. Most of the coaches are former high school English teachers, though a few have backgrounds as reading specialists or English Language Development teachers. All of them have more than ten years of classroom experience and some have closer to three or even four decades. In the hiring process, principals took the lead in candidate selection. The district required that coaches have successful teaching backgrounds, but did not set specific requirements as to number of years in the classroom or credentialing background.

Training and Support

During the first year of the coaching initiative, the district funded professional development sessions that brought coaches together once every two or three weeks. The district contracted with an external consultant who designed a year-long curriculum focused on successful strategies for working with adult learners and also reviewed reading programs, fundamental issues of reading, how to conduct observations, and accountability in the form of videotaping classroom work with teachers.

In the second year of the initiative, coaches met formally once a month. They also met informally in smaller groups after school hours or

communicated via email. Topics have included training on the district's data system to look at SAT-9 and district assessment scores, Reciprocal Teaching, and how to read and use a district assessment that diagnoses students' reading skill gaps. Coaches have also used their time to develop good inquiry skills. As Director of Education Roland explained, "being able to ask the right kinds of questions–the open-ended questions that makes the teachers reflect. We really spent a lot of time practicing and doing it among ourselves in order to build those skills."

Coordination with II/USP

The four II/USP schools are all working toward focused literacy goals and aim to have teachers using a consistent set of literacy strategies across the curriculum. Coaches in these schools have indicated that the II/USP action plan gives urgency and legitimacy to the work on literacy. With the school under pressure to increase performance, some coaches reported that teachers are more receptive to their help and have a clear understanding of how the coaches' role links directly to the schools goals. Alice Kreider, literacy coach at an II/USP school, said "because of our II/USP status the literacy coach plan is spelled out much more explicitly." The II/USP action plan can give the entire school a call to action around literacy. One coach at a non-II/USP school admitted that "I almost envy the II/USP situation. [Our school] doesn't have the incentives to improve that there are at other schools."

All II/USP schools are working with the same external evaluator who conducts three observations each year. The evaluator has involved literacy coaches and teachers in conducting observations, keeping the findings anonymous. By involving teachers in observations, coaches have reported that a cultural shift has begun to take place, opening doors for further observation. As External Evaluator Susan Silver said, "there's that unwritten individual practitioner law that you don't go into other people's classrooms unless you're invited. This process helped change that."

Coordination with Principal and School Site Leadership

Literacy coach interaction with the school's leadership team varies from school to school, from hardly any contact to weekly meetings in which coaches serve as official representatives on the school's leadership team. There is no structured framework throughout the district for formal interaction between literacy coaches and principals. For example, Jan Muscio, literacy coach at W.C. Overfelt High School, is not officially on the leadership team, but does have frequent informal communications with school leadership. She described her role as that of an intermediary, explaining, "I help the administration translate big ideas into the classroom. We can't overwhelm teachers...I'm working with how to help administration focus on a few strategies to have a better effect, rather than focus on too much and not have any effect."

In some cases principals are directly involved in supporting the work of the coaches. One principal released a teacher in need of support for one period a week expressly to work with the literacy coach. He also talks to teachers about the coach frequently; according to the coach "the principal puts the word out RT [Reciprocal Teaching] is my main in-class function. He communicates this at every opportunity."

The distinction between coach and administrator with evaluative capabilities is clear at both school and district levels. As one coach said, "the staff knows that I am on their side." Assistant Superintendent Ordaz put it very clearly; "our literacy coaches are not in the position to form a value of whether a teacher's doing a good job or not. That's not their role."

Collective Bargaining Support

The position is officially designated Teacher on Special Assignment, a generic title that allows the district to release the position. The district has chosen not to merge the coaching initiative with the PAR or BTSA programs partly because of the collective bargaining complications that might arise. As Teachers on Special Assignment the coaches are still within the scope of the collective bargaining unit, but the district has more freedom to define, post and hire for the position since it is not governed by PAR/BTSA. In structuring the position, the district benefited from Assistant Superintendent Ordaz's expertise as a negotiator.

"What helps with us," Ordaz reflected, "is that I was the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and I negotiated contracts in this district for years. So I have that experience to draw from as we started forming and shaping what we're doing."

Accountability

Documentation varies from school to school. Some coaches keep logs, but the practice is not universal because it is not a district requirement. Each school submits quarterly literacy reports to the superintendent; in some cases these reports have been effective sources of information on coaching. The district had hoped that literacy coaches would videotape classrooms during coaching sessions, but this plan has faced resistance from both coaches who felt that videotaping crossed over into evaluation, and teachers who perceived it as threatening. At the end of the first year of coaching, the coaches gave a presentation at a district leadership team retreat on the skills and techniques that improve literacy in content area classes.

East Side has developed a literacy coaching rubric detailing the different components and levels of progression in a literacy coach's job. It establishes what coaching should look like at the Beginning, Intermediate, Proficient and Accomplished levels in four criteria: Coaching and Mentoring, Personal Growth, Pedagogical Accountability and Assessment Accountability. Assistant Superintendent Ordaz explained, "The rubric is our basic attempt at evaluating the work of the coaches along with evidence. Because the rubric really is a judgment tool, it's trying to standardize judgment…The rubric is to be used to estimate the efficacy of the program." The author of the rubric, a Teacher on Special Assignment who participated in the first year of training with the literacy coaches, said that the original intent was to use the rubric in coach/principal consultations, but this has not happened yet.

ii. Funding

East Side Union High School District is investing about $1.4 million dollars in literacy coaching. The initiative is funded by a combination of sources:

- Title I
- Volunteer Integration Program
- EIA
- Staff Development through SB 1882
- BASRC

The largest sources of funding are categorical, primarily Title I and EIA. Six schools in the district qualify for Title I funding, and this is the main source for the coaching position at these sites. The other four schools also receive categorical funding from GATE, EIA and staff development, but the sum of these sources is far less than what other schools receive from Title I. In these four schools the district uses Volunteer Integration Program money to fund the coaching position. BASRC's $300,000 grant does not go directly to pay literacy coach salaries, but does support some of their professional development. "You have to mix and match," said Assistant Superintendent Ordaz, "because of the inflexibility of categorical funding."

iii. What Literacy Coaches Do

The answer to the question "What do literacy coaches do?" varies from school to school in East Side district, rendering it impossible to make any generalized statements about all literacy coaches. However, it is possible to say that all of the literacy coaches are doing some of the work described below.

Faculty at East Side schools ranges from about 80 to 220 in the largest school; even at the smallest school coaches clearly cannot work with all teachers. Which subset of teachers gets coached varies from school to school. In the II/USP schools, coaches are working with teachers who teach the most at-risk kids. The definition of "most at-risk" also varies from school to school, sometimes meaning those scoring below the 40th percentile on the SAT-9, sometimes meaning those scoring below the 25th percentile. In some II/USP schools, the group of teachers coached has been narrowed to include only the teachers working with low-performing 9th or 10th grade students. At least one of the non-II/USP schools is trying to move to this type of student-centered coaching approach, but has had a hard time of it. As one coach reflected, only working with those teachers who volunteer "isn't necessarily hitting the target group of kids."

The focus on at-risk students is aligned with the district's vision for the literacy coaching strategy; as Assistant Superintendent Ordaz explained, "we know that based on our Northwest scores there's a group of youngsters that have third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade reading skills that need to be raised. And so we want [coaches] to place a lot of attention to the teachers in those areas."

A few literacy coaches are working with individual teachers based on principals' recommendations; some of these teachers are new and some are veteran teachers who need support on literacy instruction. Most coaches offer their services to the entire staff at the beginning of the year and then add teachers to their coaching loads as they request it. As one coach at a non-II/USP school explained, "I work with teachers who want to work with me–either ones who request it, or ones who are the most open to it."

Coach Teachers One-on-One and in Groups

Coaches regularly work one-on-one with teachers in all subjects, including those subjects not focused on literacy like math and science. In coaching teachers without a literacy background, the goal, as one coach put it, is to give them "strategies they can use no matter what the curriculum is." When working with teachers in a variety of subject areas, Santa Teresa High School Literacy Coach Carol Hogland reflected on some of the strategies she coaches on, saying, "People are so concerned with losing their curriculum, but they don't need to be. On every Social Studies quiz, have an essay question. On every Science True/False test, also ask *why* to get them writing. Math can use word problems." One Spanish teacher Hogland has worked with commented that when she has students write translations she doesn't just correct the Spanish—she also corrects the English. "The kids are surprised," she said, "but I tell them this is a language class."

One-on-one coaching happens more frequently than does coaching a collaborative group. Almost all of the high schools have some collaboration time built into their schedules, but this time is used for a wide range of activities such as department meetings and has not proved to be conducive to coaching opportunities. Even with limited opportunities, however, some coaches have been able to do some collaborative coaching. At

Spotlight on Coaching

Literacy Coach Jan Muscio and 9th grade science teacher

W. C. Overfelt High School

Prior to the session, both Jan and the teacher have read a chapter in the textbook. Jan starts the session in a non-threatening manner, saying, "This was heavy reading for me. It's hard to recall this from when I studied it in high school." The teacher points out, "the kids feel the same way." They come to their meeting having each developed a list of new vocabulary words from the passage; together they agree on the 15 most important words. Asking the teacher what seems valuable, Jan lists several components of a word that the kids can learn—prefix, root, synonym, part of speech, textbook definition, using the word in a sentence, multiple meanings. The teacher decides that parts of speech are less important than the other components for the science lesson. Jan agrees to design a handout with the components they identified as important. The teacher will decide whether the kids will do the assignment individually as homework or in pairs as a project. Jan asks the teacher "what do they really need to remember [from this passage]?" and they agree that the most important concept is the Periodic Table. Jan suggests using the Periodic Table section for "a little RT," or Reciprocal Teaching. She describes how Reciprocal Teaching can be done in pairs or in groups of four and she reviews the stages – questioning, clarifying, summarizing and predicting. The teacher agrees to try it and they set a date with a class the following week. The teacher poses a final question to Jan: "The kids just don't want to write. They don't like to do it. How can I get them to do more of it? " Jan suggests different ways to approach the science journals they're already keeping, varying the length they're asked to write, giving them a first sentence to expand upon, or modeling a journal entry on an overhead. The teacher agrees to try modeling on an overhead, remarking "I'd never thought of that before."

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James Lick High School, Literacy Coach Alice Krieder meets with reading teachers every Wednesday during lunch to, as Kreider said, "discuss what is working, the challenges they face and the techniques they have tried. My role is to push the conversation forward." At Santa Teresa High School, Literacy Coach Hogland had the opportunity to coach the teachers in the Careers, Health and Driver's Education Department. The teachers approached Hogland for some help integrating literacy into their curriculum. Hogland attended their department meetings and worked with them after school for a couple of weeks to "give them a refresher. I broke apart the components of RT—it can't become routine." In high schools with no collaboration time built into the schedule, having one department meet with another is an exceptional occurrence. One coach in such a school brought together the teachers of sheltered classes with ELL teachers so they could collaborate. "Success is getting sheltered, ELD and reading teachers in the same room talking to each other," she said. "Now they have a weekly collaboration."

Observe Classrooms

Literacy Coach Muscio and External Evaluator Silver developed a one-page observation guide to help observers determine what to look for in the classroom. The one-page guide lists what to look for in standards-based instruction, literacy strategies, and differentiated instruction. It has been adapted for wide use throughout the schools. At Santa Teresa High School the literacy coaches gave every teacher a copy of the guide; Literacy Coach Hogland explained to teachers, "this is what we mean when we look for literacy in the curriculum." After an observation coaches debrief with teachers and suggest next steps. Literacy Coach Krieder gave the example that after an observation she might, "come up with some scaffolding techniques to use. If [the teacher] was reading to all the kids and asking questions, for example, I might help her think about why her ELD students didn't participate."

Santa Teresa High School literacy coaches call their observations "visitations" to avoid the association with evaluation. Literacy Coach Hogland has done "department sweeps" in which she gives the department advance notice and then visits all of the department's classrooms in one week. Every visit is followed by a debrief, both in writing and in person, if possible. She states, "this is what I saw" and always thanks the teacher for sharing his or her work.

Literacy coaches are not only doing observations in classrooms in their own schools; they have crossed school boundaries and done observations in other district high schools. This practice was prompted by II/USP visitations when literacy coaches participated in observations at each others' II/USP schools. Literacy coaches also participated in Critical Friends visits to the non-II/USP BASRC schools. As Laurene Payne, Director of AP Instructional Programs and coordinator of the cross-school visits, explained, "There's a real value to going out to another school and seeing how others operate. It broadens your viewpoint, whether it's a like or different school."

Help Teachers Link Research to Practice

Coaches help make sure that teachers get access to new information. "Teachers don't have time to go on the net and research," said Literacy Coach Muscio. "Even if they do have time to go to a conference, you can go to a workshop, but you need follow up to do [the new strategies]. I'm the connector when it's time to be in the classroom. If there's not an advocate or facilitator when they go back in the classroom it won't happen." Literacy Coach Kreider has created a strategy binder called "A Good Reader Binder" which culls information from various sources on teaching reading and provides tools such as question trees and anticipation guides. She distributed the binder to all of the teachers in her school. Another coach developed a one-page self-reflection guide for teachers to use to think about how they are using literacy strategies and whether they find them useful. The guide is not collected by the coach or used in any way toward evaluation; it is solely intended as a vehicle for teachers to reflect on how they are connecting their instruction to research-based literacy strategies.

Santa Teresa High School Literacy Coach Nancy Schwalen writes a monthly publication entitled *Literacy Tips* that contains strategies teachers can use across the curriculum. In an issue called "So you

don't always understand how the school literacy goal really fits into your curriculum," Schwalen described strategies to use with department-specific content. "If you need more ideas, that's what we [the two literacy coaches] are here for," she wrote. "When you are ready to try something in class, call one of us to observe and give you feedback." In another *Literacy Tip* titled "What to do when there is time left at the end of the period," Schwalen suggested three different ways to guide students to reflect on what they've learned, including an Exit Ticket, a 3x5 card for responses to questions like, "What remains confusing to me at this point is..." and "What I know now that I did not know before is..."

Link Instruction with Assessment
Coaches are trained in the district's data system so that they can work with teachers to access the system and use data to inform instruction. The frequency of this practice varies from school to school, as some schools do not have the technological infrastructure necessary for teachers to access to the database. The district's goal is that, as John Hathaway, Director of Testing and Assessment put it, "their position would be that transition point between the testing data and the classroom. What it means to the classroom teacher in terms of changing methodology or content in terms of their instruction. I would hope they could take results from assessments and then change that into concrete steps for teachers."

Literacy Coach Muscio worked with the Overfelt High School leadership team to develop a SAT-9 presentation for every student in grades 9–11. The presentation included test-taking strategies for reading comprehension such as context clues and identifying the main idea. She also sent a memo to all teachers to make sure they understood that reading vocabulary and reading comprehension are the most heavily weighted in calculating the API. Test-prep strategies she suggests are not the 'fill-in-the-bubble' variety; they are strategies to help students comprehend. Muscio encouraged, "when reading in class, be sure to have students identify the main idea, understand the sequence of events, understand relevant details, infer, predict and use context clues to determine new word meanings. Have students read out loud in small groups and help each other clarify word meanings. Have students practice summarizing what they read, orally and in writing."

Provide Staff Professional Development
Coaches occasionally give professional development workshops on topics like Reciprocal Teaching and vocabulary teaching techniques. Some literacy coaches have provided staff development during the summer. At a summer institute, the two literacy coaches at Santa Teresa High School did a reading overview addressing topics such as differentiated instruction, graphic organizers, and literacy connections in math and science. The summer institute is invaluable, according to Literacy Coach Hogland because, "it's time to work together, talk together, helping math and science teachers see the literacy connection. How to handle the texbook, vocabulary, it's all literacy." Hogland also helped to develop a three day Winter Institute on literacy in 2000 on several literacy topics, including a review of what brain research says about how people process information.

Demonstrate Lessons in Classrooms
Lesson demonstrations in classrooms take place less frequently than most of the other strategies employed by literacy coaches. A couple of coaches reported that they do offer to model lessons, but teachers usually are not interested. They have more success with teachers with whom they've established long-term one-on-one coaching relationships. Literacy Coach Muscio modeled the use of Reciprocal Teaching in English and Social Studies classes; after several coaching sessions with a Science teacher, she modeled it in Science class as well.

iv. Future Directions

East Side is actively planning to change the literacy coach model next year, primarily by clarifying the coaching role and responsibilities and making sure that coaches have the support that they need to do their job as the district originally envisioned. While still recognizing that each high school is unique, the district would like to see less variety and more consistency among roles in schools. "What we are trying to do is spell out quite clearly not only for coaches but for the management what the coaches will have to be doing month by month," said Director of Education Roland. "The management team should do some walk-throughs at least twice a year and meet with coaches once a

month. Coaches, too, are going to have to be a little more clear about putting together individual teacher portfolios. They need to have something that they can show as to strategies that they've demonstrated. All of that kind of thing needs to be clearly defined and put in a portfolio to show that they're doing the job that needs to be done." The district is considering requiring that coaches conduct at least two observations for a minimum of 25 teachers every six weeks. Coaches have also expressed a desire for more clarity in their job description. Increased clarity will both help coaches have a well-defined sense of what they need to accomplish and help administrators understand the parameters of the coaching position, enabling coaches to stay on task.

Accountability will also play a larger role in the coming year. In an ideal world, Assistant Superintendent Ordaz would "like to see how many times a lesson has been demonstrated. I'd like to see how many times a coach has visited classrooms. I'd like to know how many times a coach has critiqued a lesson. I'd like to know the frequency of collaboration with departments as a whole, or with groups of teachers. I'd like to see how many times a coach has collaborated with the leadership of the school and said to the principal or the vice principal, here's some things I see." Roland is creating a more consistent set of logs coaches can use to document observations.

Next year, the district is also planning to return to a more formal approach to professional development for coaches. The focus will be on building the skills coaches need to be literacy strategy experts.

IV. Main Benefits to Literacy Coaching

During observations, interviews and focus groups over the school year 2001-2002, many stakeholders discussed benefits of the literacy coaching model. Teachers, coaches, principals and district administrators alike gave numerous reports of teachers changing their instructional practice and engaging more students more effectively, all in response to literacy coaching. The benefits highlighted below represent the leading indicators of change related to attaining the program model's main goal: raising student achievement through increasing teacher capacity.

Growth of Collaborative Teacher Culture

In schools where teachers meet with coaches regularly, teachers, coaches and administrators report distinct cultural shifts, including increased:

- Teacher willingness and ability to collaborate,
- Peer accountability,
- Individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms and instructional strategies, and
- Support for new teachers.

Working together in coaching sessions is changing the way teachers do business. "Now we're looking at student work in a collaborative, systematic way," explained Walnut Creek Literacy Coach Maureen Fornengo. "Collaboration time provides us with a different culture than we had just a few years back when classrooms were closed." Teachers are building the skills to use collaboration time productively. Describing coached collaboration time, Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa said, "[Teachers] have performance objectives and goals. They know what they want to accomplish. And they're looking at their focus on students and student outcomes---not just their own work but how their students are doing." With literacy coaches facilitating teacher collaboration time, discussions are focused on teaching and learning, strengthening the professional capacity of teachers and the cultural capacity of the school.

Literacy coaches break down isolation and foster collegiality even when they're just visiting teachers' classrooms. "I find something that I can share with somebody in every classroom," Campbell Literacy Coach Barbara Ungersma reflected. "I can say 'Sue's doing this. Sam's doing this.' It's fun to be able to spread that around." Coaches strengthen informal but professional networks among teachers, cross-pollinating classrooms with other teacher's ideas.

In Walnut Creek and Campbell, where coaches work with all of the new teachers, many expect to see coaching and collaboration increasing teacher retention. As Walnut Creek Literacy Coach Jan Knight reflected, "because of collaboration the new teachers get the benefit of the [veteran] teachers. The teachers that have been here for a while will frequently either provide them with resources or come in and introduce a topic to their class." According to Campbell Literacy Coach Kathleen McCowan, "putting that support in place, taking people that have potential but raw potential and being able to distill it, is one of the most powerful parts of the literacy coaching model." Coached collaboration time gives new teachers the support and access to the expertise they need.

Teachers Become More Receptive to Change

As coaches model changes in teaching practice, they inspire their colleagues. Coaches encourage teachers to "go outside their comfort zone" as one Campbell coach put it, partially because coaches go outside their own comfort zones every time they enter classrooms and demonstrate lessons in front of their peers. When coaches take risks themselves and support teachers to do so as well, they create an environment in which teachers feel comfortable making changes to their practice. Once teachers are receptive to change, the inconsistencies and gaps in programs and grade-levels are reduced and the school, and district, have more consistent programs, strategies and accountability.

Throughout many schools, stakeholders testified to teachers accepting the coaches and changing their practice. Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa reflected, "I think that you're seeing a whole lot more overall acceptance that the coach is there to help them improve their skills. We've broken some barriers down with staff that, 'hey, these people are here to help me as a professional and are a resource. And I'm not threatened by them." Echoing the superintendent's thoughts, a Walnut Creek literacy coach reflected that, in her school, there is now "a climate where teachers are willing to take risks in their practice. That was the soul of my work this year. And now we have 2nd grade willing to be a lab classroom. I feel better about helping teachers take a risk in changing practice than any other piece."

Many coaches reported having breakthroughs with teachers who, after expressing reservations initially, became eager for new information. One literacy coach talked frankly about how difficult it was for her to work with many veteran teachers at first. "Now," she said with a smile, "They're stopping me, asking, 'can you come model?'" Campbell Assistant Superintendent Gwynneth Heil said, "they trust the [coaches]. It's the most incredible thing we've ever done. We're now getting a veteran teacher who's never done any staff development saying 'that's intriguing. Will you come in my classroom and model?'" The true test of any school reform initiative is the reaction of the veteran teachers. When teachers with decades of experience are changing their practice, the strategy is just a success—it's a wild success.

Increased Focus on Equity

Literacy coaches strengthen the quality of instruction for at-risk kids, prompting teachers to focus on helping their at-risk students and advocating for equity constantly in the school community. Throughout the education system, teachers with the least experience and lowest performance evaluations are placed with the lowest-performing students. Literacy coaches can help ameliorate this situation, helping these teachers gain the skills they need to meet the needs of the students they are teaching. Coaches can also prompt teachers to keep at-risk students central to their instruction and planning, asking them hard questions and offering strategies to help. As one coach reflected, "not all teachers are doing [differentiated instruction]. And they all have an excuse why not—numbers, materials. I say, it's OK if you're not using [a particular strategy], but how are you addressing struggling readers? It's hard for them to come up with an answer to that." Coaches can also bring a sense of urgency to school communities as advocates for equity. In the courtyard of a high school in East Side, one literacy coach said, "this is the future of California right here. We can't just say equity. We have to give teachers some tools."

Improved Communication Between Teachers and District Leaders

Clear, consistent communication between teachers and the district is elusive; literacy coaches, with their direct access to both classrooms and district administration, are uniquely positioned to facilitate communication. Coaches act as advocates in both directions, representing teachers' concerns to district staff and the district's perspective to teachers. "It has expanded the leadership team in our district," said Walnut Creek Superintendent DeSa. "Lots of times a memo is sent from the district office and the school is then able to say, 'The district makes us do this.' It's a big difference when you have lit coaches that are part of the decision-making process down at the district. And then having that voice at a school to say, 'I was there. I was part of that decision. And, no, this is what we are going to do.' It is powerful for an organization to have that kind of communication and articulation."

Coaches have a big-picture understanding of the district's plans and can see links between different programs which they can then articulate to teachers. A Campbell coach said "We're advocates. We understand what the goal is and can tell teachers, 'This is a good program. You can get a lot out of it. It's not a waste of your time'." When coaches are legitimate believers in the new literacy strategies they can help shift school culture and increase teacher buy-in, reducing the 'us/them' schism between teachers and administrators.

Literacy coaches also act as advocates for teachers, voicing teachers' needs and concerns to district

administrators. Coaches can warn district leaders when teachers feel swamped by testing or don't see the connections among various literacy programs. Literacy coaches know when teachers feel overwhelmed; in a conversation with district staff about newly adopted texts one coach explained, "their concern is 'Oh my God, one more thing.'" She went on to describe how she'd helped teachers see how the newly adopted materials could work with the materials they were already using by making an analogy to the human body, with different materials comprising the skin, skeleton and circulatory system.

Increased Leadership Capacity

Literacy coaches distribute school site leadership, increase teacher leadership capacity and develop future school administrators. Coaches give principals an expanded support structure through which to work toward school goals. "It's spreading the wealth, and as a result we're getting more and more experts," said Campbell Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen. Increased teacher leadership promotes the long-term health of a school, providing a strong core of leadership and support amidst the constant change and turnover that characterizes education.

Literacy coaches can also become the administrators of tomorrow. Coaches develop a big-picture understanding of the needs of teachers, become smarter consumers of curricular and professional development opportunities, and develop the skills to work effectively with entire faculties. These are some of the most important skills to function as an effective school principal. "[Literacy coaching] is hard, hard work," said Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa. "I think they don't realize it but we're building some leadership capacity for us to look at future principals by doing this."

V. Recommendations for Successful District Implementation

No two school districts are alike and there is no such thing as a blueprint for adopting a new district strategy. However, in studying how literacy coaching works in several BASRC districts, the following recommendations emerged as fundamental to a successful program.

1. Prioritize and Align Funding

In the absence of explicit state funding for literacy coaches, districts have to take initiative to prioritize coaching over other strategies and align funding accordingly. To prioritize literacy coaches, districts must plunge into what can be a painful process, sacrificing other programs and personnel. "What you have to do as a district is look at every aspect and reorganize so that you can have your emphasis be your coaches," said Campbell Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen. "That means you reorganize how your money is allocated and what positions you have. You wind up being very thin in many district departments, but you're not thin in coaches. You throw the money into where you know it's going to make a difference. And the rest—you find a way to make it work."

Districts need to analyze all possible sources of funding and weave the available sources together into a coherent funding stream. Districts in the BASRC network have drawn upon a wide variety of sources to support literacy coaching, including Title I, Title II, Title VII, Federal Class Size Reduction, Safe and Drug Free Schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Peer Assistance Review, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, Tobacco Use Prevention Education, Economic Impact Aid, School Improvement Program, Emergency Immigrant Education Program, Gifted and Talented Education, English Language Acquisition Program, School Safety Block Grant, Volunteer Integration Program, Staff Development through SB 1882 and API block grants. Districts with vision and determination are able to manufacture coherence out of funding chaos. "One of the greatest gifts we've gotten from BASRC is the budget alignment piece," said Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa. The BASRC budget alignment tool provides districts with step-by-step instructions to align state funding streams with professional development priorities. "Align your priorities with your budget," DeSa continued. "The budget alignment piece from BASRC allows us to communicate the importance of funding what your priorities are." It takes creativity and perseverance to find the necessary funding sources and bend them to meet local needs; unfortunately, in the current system, this is the only way to support a comprehensive literacy coaching initiative.

2. Develop a Clear Job Definition

For a new role such as literacy coaches, districts must design the position collaboratively and communicate the job definition clearly. If the coaches' role is developed with input from all primary stakeholders—principals, district administrators, school board members and representatives from collective bargaining unit(s)—reaching consensus regarding the goals and objectives of the coaching position, it will inevitably help the initiative's longevity by securing stakeholder support. Many advocate that the district's collective bargaining unit(s) be involved in creating job definition from beginning. "The union has got to be informed, encouraged to participate, and have a role," said Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa. "There's just no doubt about it."

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The coaches' job definition should be as explicit as possible, defining which segment of the faculty the coach will work with, what strategies the coach will emphasize, and how many classroom demonstrations and observations coaches will be held accountable for each month. Though this may seem heavy-handed, clarity helps coaches understand their goals and what's expected of them, and it helps principals know how and within what parameters they can best use coaches. The district must also set firm boundaries as to the duties coaches will not perform, such as evaluating teachers, substitute teaching or fulfilling unpopular administrative or reporting duties. Setting firm boundaries between literacy coaches and administrators, in particular, is essential to gain support from the teachers' union.

3. Communicate Why

Districts must offer a clear, consistent, data-based rationale for literacy coaching so that all stakeholders, especially teachers, understand why the position is essential. Chances for buy-in greatly increase when new strategies are developed to meet a demonstrated student achievement need, instead of in response to a newly available funding source or state mandate. A strategy such as literacy coaching "has to be focused on your student needs," said Campbell Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen. "You have to look at multiple measures and analyze the data, but the most important thing is you have to react to that data. Let that data give you the direction for the next step you need to take." If that next step is literacy coaching, districts must communicate how it will meet demonstrated needs for all teachers. To help coaches gain access to middle and high school teachers' classrooms, the district needs to emphasize the importance of literacy across the curriculum. "The biggest challenge is getting the entire staff to understand that reading is an issue of every curricular area," explained one high school literacy coach. "You're not learning if you can't read." Coaches can deliver this message themselves, but ultimately it has to come clearly from the district office to support coaches system-wide.

When districts make the coaching rationale explicit, coaches also have a better sense of purpose and goals. "The job description needs to be clear as to their duties, but it's beyond the job description," explained Campbell Superintendent VanderMolen. "It's what is the focus and what is the purpose of the job? In a typical job description—you're in the classroom coaching, you're doing demo lessons, this and that. OK, but related to what? Related to these things that we have identified as the needs of that school, the needs of that teacher." Districts must go beyond simply posting a basic job description if they are to generate support for their commitment to coaching.

4. Structure Coordination with Principals

Districts must provide time and incentives for principals and literacy coaches to communicate so that they develop a mutual understanding of how coaching meets site-based needs. Principal-coach communication is one of the most important components in a successful coaching model. The district must promote frequent communication between principals and coaches as an integral part of the initiative, and support this communication by creating structured opportunities for principals and coaches to work together. Districts that bring principals and coaches together on a monthly basis find the time invaluable.

Districts also need to give principals some control over what the coaching position looks like at their sites. Within the district's guidelines for the job, principals need the flexibility to design the coaching position to meet school site needs. Individual school focus is crucial to securing principal buy-in, which, in turn, is crucial to coaches' success. Principals are instrumental in setting the tone for school culture. Teachers will know immediately if the principal does not support the coaches' role and it will be extremely difficult for the coach to gain access to all teachers. When districts cultivate principal buy-in and structure opportunities for principals and coaches to collaborate and coordinate, they provide a firm foundations for the initiative.

5. Focus on Literacy Coaching in the Strategic Plan

Literacy coaching must be a central strategy in the strategic plan, seamlessly integrated into the district's research-based literacy program. Earnestly reforming schools and districts frequently suffer

from overload, adopting every new idea that comes along and ending up both fragmented and relatively unchanged. Districts that use literacy coaches must make them one of a few high-priority strategies. "If I were to talk to other superintendents about a recommendation," said Campbell Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen, "what I would say is if this is not your priority in the district, don't step into it. It doesn't make sense to just put coaching on top of everything else." Coaches at II/USP schools offered the same advice, feeling that even within the constraints of the state's II/USP program, they benefit from having literacy coaches explicitly in the schools' action plan.

If literacy coaching is an afterthought or an add-on, teachers won't buy into the strategy. Teachers are highly attuned to "fads" thrust upon them from administrators and if they are truly to trust and welcome literacy coaches into their classrooms and work seriously at changing their practice, they must feel confident that literacy coaches are connected with their districts' long-term plans. "If you're going to implement literacy coaches, it has to emerge out of a plan, whether it be a strategic plan, or a school site council," advised Walnut Creek Superintendent Mike DeSa. "It's got to be part of the overall literacy plan at your school, part of the belief system at the school and district. It's got to be well thought-out in terms of what they're going to do once they get there. Because you only may get one shot at it."

6. Provide Professional Development for Coaches on Research-Based Strategies

Districts must provide coaches with continual professional development on a core set of research-based literacy strategies and structured time to meet with other coaches to build professional skills and community. Coaches need constant access to new information about how to teach literacy and how to work effectively with adult learners, which they may get through consultants, workshops, conferences and professional reading materials. Given the wealth of information that exists regarding literacy instruction and the rapidly changing nature of the field, districts need to support professional development opportunities that keep coaches current and focused. It does no good to send coaches out with a new strategy each month; teachers get understandably frustrated if they feel as if they are always chasing a moving target. "It takes a while to really feel comfortable with any of these new strategies," explained a Campbell coach. "You know [as a teacher] you're going to close your door if you feel that too much is coming too fast." Coaches promote change, but they need district support to help them become experts in a few good strategies which they can work to help teachers integrate into their practice.

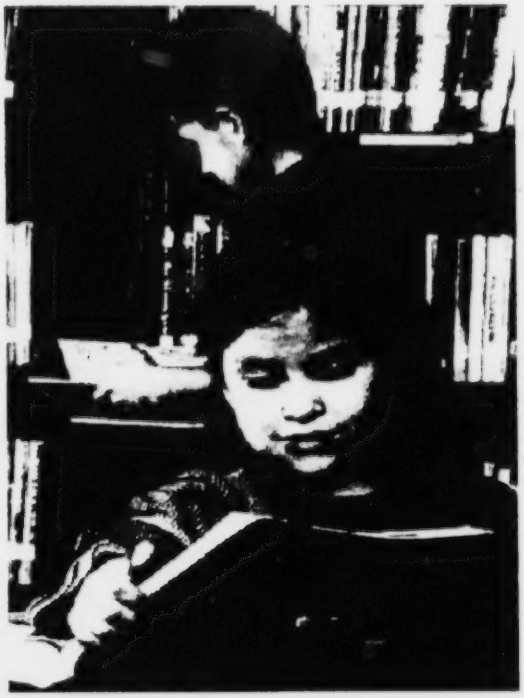
Given the newness of the position and the relatively unique role—neither teacher nor administrator yet within the framework of the school—literacy coaches have found some of the best professional development comes from talking with one another. Districts need to structure time for coaches to work together, preferably every week or every other week. Coaches can share their expertise and offer each other support in what can be a demanding job. Though literacy coaches' main charge is to spread knowledge from teacher to teacher, districts must not forget that coaches need structured opportunities to spread knowledge amongst themselves.

7. Structure Collaboration Time During the School Day

Districts must structure time during the school day for coaches to discuss instructional practice with individual teachers or grade-level teams. Coaching can't happen on a haphazard basis, during lunch or prep periods. "We used to have everything after-school," recalled Campbell Assistant Superintendent Gwynneth Heil. "We would find everybody wanted to get trained but nobody was coming in because they have lives. They wanted it, but they wouldn't go back and do it. So, we brought in the coaching model." Campbell created a weekly minimum day for coaches and teachers to collaborate. If the school structure doesn't provide formal time for coaches and teachers to work together, the message to teachers is that coaching isn't important and they shouldn't invest their time. "Collaboration time is important in creating a school culture that's open to literacy coaching," said East Side's Director of Professional Development Cathy Giammona. Districts need to support coaching by embedding collaboration time into the fabric of the school day.

8. Keep Coaches Closely Connected to the Classroom

Districts need to keep coaches close to the classroom by requiring turnover—that is, limiting the number of years any particular teacher can serve as a literacy coach. Coaches agree that one of the reasons they have credibility with teachers is that they are so closely linked to the classroom themselves. Having recently left the classroom to coach, and still spending a good deal of time in classrooms, they aren't perceived as outsiders. Campbell Coach Kathleen McGowan explained that because teachers know she was recently a teacher too, "Teachers understand I wouldn't be talking about [a strategy] unless I thought that it would be the best practice to bring back to their classroom." The coaching position should become a permanent fixture; the person occupying the role should not. A coach in Campbell reflected on her district's three year coaching cycle, saying "it's largely to make sure that we are current. I know a lot of times in staff development you will think, well, they haven't been in a classroom for twenty years. What do they know?" Cycling coaches back into the classroom every three to five years keeps coaches connected.



As coaches return to the classroom, their expertise is not be lost; rather, they will help embed teacher leadership and collaboration into school culture. "I really will teach very differently when I go back into the classroom," reflected Campbell Coach Barbara Ungersma. "Because I have read enough of the research and seen enough of these strategies in the classroom that I am an enthusiastic convert." Districts need to commit to investing in new sets of coaches. Keeping coaches linked to the classroom preserves their most valuable asset: their credibility to teachers.

9. Continually Assess and Communicate Effectiveness

To build and maintain support for a new strategy such as literacy coaching, districts must continually assess effectiveness and communicate results to stakeholders. With principal and teacher surveys on instructional practice and diagnostic literacy assessments, districts can obtain good data that measure changes. Districts need frequent feedback both to identify successes that can be publicized to generate support, and to identify challenges that can be addressed quickly.

When data is collected, districts must share the results to build and maintain a broad base of support. Communication of data can take many forms; some districts have had success with coaches' presentations to the school board and parents' association, or with getting coaches featured in the local newspaper. "Once you start implementing, you have to continue to communicate [an initiative's] purpose and accomplishments and progress to parents and other teachers and the school board," said Walnut Creek Superintendent DeSa. "Because when it comes time to discuss budget, they will need to have a clear understanding of what it is. To manage change you have to keep people informed about what are the effects of that change. What are the challenges, the strengths, the weaknesses of the change. It puts people at ease if they have knowledge." Such externally-facing work can seem like a peripheral concern, taking time away from the heart of the effort, but it is actually what sustains a district's ability to continue its core work.

VI. State Recommendations

In recent years the state's leaders have focused on education, creating both new accountability structures and a litany of new programs and funding streams intended to radically improve the education system in California. California has put its accountability system front and center, and perhaps as a result, many educators have focused on testing and some have taken issue with the quality of the measures being used to assess schools' progress. Less often addressed but perhaps more crucial to the success of the state's ambitious effort to improve its schools is the relative investment being made by the state in pressure vs. support. California is funding pressure, but under-funding support to improve. The under-investment by the state in professional development and related support for teachers and administrators is compounded by the requirements of a host of highly regulated funding streams. The following are two key recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the current state professional development system.

Provide Flexibility with Accountability

The rhetoric of the state's approach to improving schools is one of increased accountability for results and increased flexibility for the means. But the political reality of the legislative process means that every categorical program has an interest group lobbying for its continuation, and every legislator running for reelection wants to be responsible for a program that can be described in a sound bite. The result is a myriad of highly-specified professional development programs. These programs constitute a major disincentive for districts to develop a comprehensive professional development plan. Nor does the lack of flexibility that characterizes California's approach to funding schools acknowledge the diversity of California's school districts, districts that vary from large to small, urban to suburban, and elementary or high school to unified districts.

Of course, this report reveals that these barriers are not insurmountable. Innovative and creative district leaders are able to mix and match funding sources to create coherent and effective programs. But the fact that some have succeeded does not diminish the impact of these barriers on the majority of schools and districts. And even in the most creative and committed districts, these effective programs are at risk: there's no guarantee from year to year that the resources to support these programs will be available and accessible. More flexibility would enable superintendents and district staff to use their professional expertise both to plan and act on innovative strategies that meet local district needs.

Hold Districts Accountable for Outcomes

In a system with clear statewide performance expectations, districts can be given flexibility and be held accountable to measuring and communicating progress. If a district shows no indicators of success after a period of time, the state could intervene, much as it does with schools. A district with a strong record of student achievement, however, deserves to be able to keep doing what's been proven to work for their students. Districts with flexibility as to how they use funds and accountability as to outcomes will be more likely to innovate and meet local need all while striving toward state-established standards.

Include Coaching in State-Funded Professional Development Programs

The state needs to invest funds in innovative forms of school-based professional development such as coaching, collaboration time and mentoring. Currently, state professional development programs are weighted toward traditional forms of professional development, such as workshops, trainings or conferences, many of which are conducted off-site for small groups of teachers from a given school rather than for the entire faculty. The current system emphasizes teachers' learning new knowledge from outside experts. It is important for teachers to have this kind of training, but it needs to be 1) accessible to all teachers; 2) linked to the creation of a coherent instructional program in the school; and 3) tied to site-based support and

accountability for teachers to effectively implement new strategies to meet the needs of all students. Site-based professional development strategies such as literacy coaching are an essential component of long-term improvement in the education system. But this fact does not constitute a rationale for the creation of yet another categorical program: the state should not create a Literacy Coaching program with its own set of narrowly defined criteria. Instead, the state should review and revise its rules and regulations to ensure that existing professional development funding can be used for innovative and effective strategies such as literacy coaching.

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VI. Glossary of Terms

Academic Performance Index (API) Index on which California's K-12 Schools are ranked based on STAR testing performance. Schools receive a base API score between 200-1000.

API Growth Target A school's API growth target is five percent of the distance between a school's base API score and 800, the statewide performance target.

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) State program established to provide school-site support for and assessments of beginning teachers.

Cycle of Inquiry An ongoing improvement process that involves asking questions, collecting data, analyzing data, and refining practices with the goal of improving student achievement and teacher practices.

English Language Learners (ELLs) Students with a primary language other than English currently engaged in the process of acquiring English.

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Test used to assess balanced reading skills including phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency.

Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) State Program to provide intervention and assistance to schools ranked in the bottom 50% of scores on the API and not meeting their growth targets.

Mosaic of Thought Authored by E. Keene and S. Zimmerman, *Mosaic of Thought* proposes in-depth instruction in the comprehension strategies that proficient readers use to make meaning from text.

Northwest Reading Assessment Developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the test assesses the six traits of an effective reader: conventions, comprehension, context, interpretations, synthesis, evaluation.

Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR) State program begun in 1999 which funds exemplary school faculty to support both new teachers and tenured teachers who have received an unsatisfactory evaluation.

Reciprocal Teaching Teaching technique which guides students through the process of actively engaging with text, predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing so they can thoroughly comprehend material.

Title I Schools Title I Schools receive federal funding from the Title I program allocated according to the number of students living in poverty.

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BASRC seeks to transform schools across the Bay Area into vital places to learn and to teach. We work with education leaders in both schools and districts to develop, assess and use the knowledge needed for schools to engage in a systematic and sustainable improvement process. BASRC aims to help create a future in which all students learn to high levels and where race, class, language, gender, and culture are no longer good predictors of educational outcomes.

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This report is also available on our website at http://www.basrc.org/Pubs&Docs/LiteracyCoaching.pdf

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